

THE HIDDEN SIDE OF THINGS

VOL. I

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THE
HIDDEN SIDE OF THINGS

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VOL. I.

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FOREWORD

THIS book has been in contemplation, and even in process of construction, for the last ten or twelve years, but only now has it been found possible to publish it. It has lost nothing by the delay, for a student of the occult never ceases to learn, and I know a good deal more in various ways now than I did twelve years ago, even though I see still more clearly than ever what an infinity of further knowledge stretches before us for our acquiring.

Much of what is written here has appeared in the form of articles in *The Theosophist* and elsewhere; but all has been revised, and considerable additions have been made. I trust that it may help some brothers to realise the importance of that far larger part of life which is beyond our physical sight—to understand that, as the Lord BUDDHA Himself has taught us:

The unseen things are more.

C. W. LEADBEATER

First Section



Introductory

THE HIDDEN SIDE OF THINGS

CHAPTER I

OCCULTISM

THE term 'occultism' is one which has been much misunderstood. In the mind of the ignorant it was, even recently, synonymous with magic, and its students were supposed to be practitioners of the black art, veiled in flowing robes of scarlet covered with cabalistic signs, sitting amidst uncanny surroundings with a black cat as a familiar, compounding unholy decoctions by the aid of satanic evocations.

Even now, and among those whom education has raised above such superstition as this, there still remains a good deal of misapprehension. For them its derivation from the Latin word *occultus* ought to explain at once that it is the science of the hidden;

but they often regard it contemptuously as nonsensical and unpractical, as connected with dreams and fortune-telling, with hysteria and necromancy, with the search for the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone. Students, who should know better, perpetually speak as though the hidden side of things were intentionally concealed, as though knowledge with regard to it ought to be in the hands of all men, but was being deliberately withheld by the caprice or selfishness of a few; whereas the fact is that nothing is or can be hidden from us except by our own limitations, and that for every man as he evolves the world grows wider and wider, because he is able to see more and more of its grandeur and its loveliness.

As an objection against this statement may be cited the well-known fact that, at each of the great Initiations (which mark the advance of the neophyte along the path of the higher progress, a definite new block of knowledge is given to him. That is quite true, but the knowledge can be given only because the recipient has evolved to the point at which he can grasp it. It is no more being withheld from ordinary humanity than the knowledge of conic sections is

being withheld from the child who is still struggling with the multiplication-table. When that child reaches the level at which he can comprehend quadratic equations, the teacher is ready to explain to him the rules which govern them. In exactly the same way, when a man has qualified himself for the reception of the information given at a certain Initiation, he is forthwith initiated. But the only way to attain the capacity to imbibe that higher knowledge is to begin by trying to understand our present conditions, and to order our lives intelligently in view of the facts which we find.

Occultism, then, is the study of the hidden side of nature; or rather, it is the study of the *whole* of nature, instead of only that small part of it which comes under the investigation of modern science. At the present stage of our development, by far the greater part of nature is entirely unknown to the majority of mankind, because they have as yet unfolded only a minute proportion of the faculties which they possess. The ordinary man, therefore, is basing his philosophy (so far as he has any) upon entirely inadequate grounds; his actions

are moulded more or less in accordance with the few laws of nature which he knows, and consequently both his theory of life and his daily practice are necessarily inaccurate. The occultist adopts a far more comprehensive view; he takes into account those forces of the higher worlds whose action is hidden from the materialist, and so he moulds his life in obedience to the entire code of Nature's laws, instead of only by occasional reference to a minute fragment of it.

It is difficult for the man who knows nothing of the occult to realise how great, how serious and how all-pervading are his own limitations. The only way in which we can adequately symbolise them is to suppose some form of consciousness still more limited than our own, and to think in what directions it would differ from ours. Suppose it were possible that a consciousness could exist capable of appreciating only solid matter—the liquid and gaseous forms of matter being to it as entirely non-existent as are the etheric and astral and mental forms to the ordinary man. We can readily see how for such a consciousness any adequate conception

of the world in which we live would be impossible. Solid matter, which alone could be perceived by it, would constantly be found to be undergoing serious modifications, about which no rational theory could be formed.

For example, whenever a shower of rain took place, the solid matter of the earth would undergo change; it would in many cases become both softer and heavier when charged with moisture, but the reason of such a change would necessarily be wholly incomprehensible to the consciousness which we are supposing. The wind might lift clouds of sand and transfer them from one place to another; but such motion of solid matter would be entirely inexplicable to one who had no conception of the existence of the air. Without considering more examples of what is already so obvious, we see clearly how hopelessly inadequate would be such an idea of the world as would be attainable by this consciousness limited to solid matter. What we do not realise so readily, however, is that our present consciousness falls just as far short of that of the developed man as this supposed consciousness would fall short of that which we now possess.

Theosophical students are at least theoretically acquainted with the idea that to everything there is a hidden side ; and they also know that in the great majority of cases this unseen side is of far greater importance than that which is visible to the physical eye.

To put the same idea from another point of view, the senses, by means of which we obtain all our information about external objects, are as yet imperfectly developed ; therefore the information obtained is partial. What we see in the world about us is by no means all that there is to see, and a man who will take the trouble to cultivate his senses will find that, in proportion as he succeeds, life will become fuller and richer for him. For the lover of nature, of art, of music, a vast field of incredibly intensified and exalted pleasure lies close at hand, if he will fit himself to enter upon it. Above all, for the lover of his fellow-man there is the possibility of far more intimate comprehension and therefore far wider usefulness.

We are only halfway up the ladder of evolution at present, and so our senses are only half-evolved. But it is possible for

us to hurry up that ladder—possible, by hard work, to make *our* senses *now* what all men's senses will be in the distant future. The man who has succeeded in doing this is often called a seer or a clairvoyant.

A fine word that—clairvoyant. It means 'one who sees clearly'; but it has been horribly misused and degraded, so that people associate it with all sorts of trickery and imposture—with gypsies who for sixpence will tell a maid-servant what is the colour of the hair of the duke who is coming to marry her, or with establishments in Bond Street where for a guinea fee the veil of the future is supposed to be lifted for more aristocratic clients.

All this is irregular and unscientific; in many cases it is mere charlatanry and bare-faced robbery. But not always; to foresee the future up to a certain point is a possibility; it can be done, and it has been done, scores of times; and some of these irregular practitioners unquestionably do at times possess flashes of higher vision, though usually they cannot depend upon having them when they want them.

But behind all this vagueness there is a bed-rock of fact—something which can be approached rationally and studied scientifically. It is as the result of many years of such study and experiment that I state emphatically what I have written above—that it is possible for men to develop their senses until they can see much more of this wonderful and beautiful world in which we live than is ever suspected by the untrained average man, who lives contentedly in the midst of Cimmerian darkness and calls it light.

Two thousand five hundred years ago the greatest of Indian teachers, Gautama the BUDDHA, said to his disciples: “Do not complain and cry and pray, but open your eyes and *see*. The truth is all about you, if you will only take the bandage from your eyes and look; and it is so wonderful, so beautiful, so far beyond anything that men have ever dreamt of or prayed for, and it is for ever and for ever.”

He assuredly meant far more than this of which I am writing now, but this is a step on the way towards that glorious goal of perfect realisation. If it does not yet tell us quite *all* the truth, at any rate it gives us a

good deal of it. It removes for us a host of common misconceptions, and clears up for us many points which are considered as mysteries or problems by those who are as yet uninstructed in this lore. It shows that all these things were mysteries and problems to us only because heretofore we saw so small a part of the facts, because we were looking at the various matters from below, and as isolated and unconnected fragments, instead of rising above them to a standpoint whence they are comprehensible as parts of a mighty whole. It settles in a moment many questions which have been much disputed—such, for example, as that of the continued existence of man after death. It explains many of the strange things which the Churches tell us; it dispels our ignorance and removes our fear of the unknown by supplying us with a rational and orderly scheme.

Besides all this, it opens up a new world to us in regard to our every-day life—a new world which is yet a part of the old. It shows us that, as I began by saying, there is a hidden side to everything, and that our most ordinary actions often produce results of which without this study

we should never have known. By it we understand the rationale of what is commonly called telepathy, for we see that just as there are waves of heat or light or electricity, so there are waves produced by thought, though they are in a finer type of matter than the others, and therefore not perceptible to our physical senses. By studying these vibrations we see how thought acts, and we learn that it is a tremendous power for good or for ill—a power which we are all of us unconsciously wielding to some extent—which we can use a hundred-fold more effectively when we comprehend its workings. Further investigation reveals to us the method of formation of what are called ‘thought-forms,’ and indicates how these can be usefully employed both for ourselves and for others in a dozen different ways.

The occultist studies carefully all these unseen effects, and consequently knows much more fully than other men the result of what he is doing. He has more information about life than others have, and he exercises his common-sense by modifying his life in accordance with what he knows. In many ways we live differently now from

our forefathers in mediæval times, because we know more than they did. We have discovered certain laws of hygiene; wise men live according to that knowledge, and therefore the average length of life is decidedly greater now than it was in the Middle Ages. There are still some who are foolish or ignorant, who either do not know the laws of health or are careless about keeping them; they think that because disease-germs are invisible to them, they are therefore of no importance; they don't believe in new ideas. Those are the people who suffer first when an epidemic disease arrives, or some unusual strain is put upon the community. They suffer unnecessarily, because they are behind the times. But they injure not only themselves by their neglect; the conditions caused by their ignorance or carelessness often bring infection into a district which might otherwise be free from it.

The matter of which I am writing is precisely the same thing at a different level. The microscope revealed disease-germs; the intelligent man profited by the discovery, and rearranged his life, while the unintelligent man paid no attention, but went on

as before. Clairvoyance reveals thought-force and many other previously unsuspected powers; once more the intelligent man profits by this discovery, and rearranges his life accordingly. Once more also the unintelligent man takes no heed of the new discoveries; once more he thinks that what he cannot see can have no importance for him; once more he continues to suffer quite unnecessarily, because he is behind the times.

Not only does he often suffer positive pain, but he also misses so much of the pleasure of life. To painting, to music, to poetry, to literature, to religious ceremonies, to the beauties of nature there is always a hidden side—a fulness, a completeness beyond the mere physical; and the man who can see or sense this has at his command a wealth of enjoyment far beyond the comprehension of the man who passes through it all with unopened perceptions.

The perceptions exist in every human being, though as yet undeveloped in most. To unfold them means generally a good deal of time and hard work, but it is exceedingly well worth while. Only let no man undertake the effort unless his motives

are absolutely pure and unselfish, for he who seeks wider faculty for any but the most exalted purposes will bring upon himself a curse and not a blessing.

But the man of affairs, who has no time to spare for a sustained effort to evolve nascent powers within himself, is not thereby debarred from sharing in some at least of the benefits derived from occult study, any more than the man who possesses no microscope is thereby prevented from living hygienically. The latter has not seen the disease-germs, but from the testimony of the specialist he knows that they exist, and he knows how to guard himself from them. Just in the same way a man who has as yet no dawning of clairvoyant vision may study the writings of those who have gained it, and in this way profit by the results of their labour. True, he cannot yet see all the glory and the beauty which are hidden from us by the imperfection of our senses; but he can readily learn how to avoid the unseen evil, and how to set in motion the unseen forces of good. So, long before he actually *sees* them, he can conclusively prove to himself their existence, just as the man who drives an electric motor proves to

himself the existence of electricity, though he has never seen it and does not in the least know what it is.

We must try to understand as much as we can of the world in which we live. We must not fall behind in the march of evolution, we must not let ourselves be anachronisms, for lack of interest in these new discoveries, which yet are only the presentation from a new point of view of the most archaic wisdom. 'Knowledge is power' in this case as in every other; in this case, as in every other, to secure the best results, the glorious trinity of power, wisdom and love must ever go hand in hand.

There is a difference, however, between theoretical acquaintance and actual realisation; and I have thought that it might help students somewhat towards the grasp of the realities to have a description of the unseen side of some of the simple transactions of every-day life as they appear to clairvoyant vision—to one, let us say, who has developed within himself the power of perception through the astral, mental and causal bodies. Their appearance as seen by means of the intuitional vehicle is infinitely

grander and more effective still, but so entirely inexpressible that it seems useless to say anything about it; for on that level all experience is within the man instead of without, and the glory and the beauty of it is no longer something which he watches with interest, but something which he feels in his inmost heart, because it is part of himself.

The object of this book is to give some hints as to the inner side of the world as a whole and of our daily life. We shall consider this latter in three divisions, which will resemble the conjugations of our youthful days in being passive, middle and active respectively—how we are influenced, how we influence ourselves, and how we influence others; and we shall conclude by observing a few of the results which must inevitably flow from a wider diffusion of this knowledge as to the realities of existence.

CHAPTER II

THE WORLD AS A WHOLE

A WIDER OUTLOOK

WHEN we look upon the world around us, we cannot hide from ourselves the existence of a vast amount of sorrow and suffering. True, much of it is obviously the fault of the sufferers, and might easily be avoided by the exercise of a little self-control and common-sense; but there is also much which is not immediately self-induced, but undoubtedly comes from without. It often seems as though evil triumphs, as though justice fails in the midst of the storm and stress of the roaring confusion of life, and because of this many despair of the ultimate result, and doubt whether there is in truth any plan of definite progress behind all this bewildering chaos.

It is all a question of the point of view; the man who is himself in the thick

of the fight cannot judge of the plan of the general or the progress of the conflict. To understand the battle as a whole, one must withdraw from the tumult and look down upon the field from above. In exactly the same way, to comprehend the plan of the battle of life we must withdraw ourselves from it for the time, and in thought look down upon it from above—from the point of view not of the body which perishes but of the soul which lives for ever. We must take into account not only the small part of life which our physical eyes can see, but the vast totality of which at present so much is invisible to us.

Until that has been done we are in the position of a man looking from beneath at the under side of some huge piece of elaborate tapestry which is in process of being woven. The whole thing is to us but a confused medley of varied colour, of ragged hanging ends, without order or beauty, and we are unable to conceive what all this mad clatter of machinery can be doing; but when through our knowledge of the hidden side of nature we are able to look down from above, the pattern begins to

unfold itself before our eyes, and the apparent chaos shows itself as orderly progress.

A more forcible analogy may be obtained by contemplating in imagination the view of life which would present itself to some tiny microbe whirled down by a resistless flood, such as that which rushes through the gorge of Niagara. Boiling, foaming, swirling, the force of that stream is so tremendous that its centre is many feet higher than its sides. The microbe on the surface of such a torrent must be dashed hither and thither wildly amidst the foam, sometimes thrown high in air, sometimes whirled backwards in an eddy, unable to see the banks between which he is passing, having every sense occupied in the mad struggle to keep himself somehow above water. To him that strife and stress is all the world of which he knows; how can he tell whither the stream is going?

But the man who stands on the bank, looking down on it all, can see that all this bewildering tumult is merely superficial, and that the one fact of real importance is the steady onward sweep of those millions of tons of water downwards towards the sea. If we can furthermore suppose the microbe to

have some idea of progress, and to identify it with forward motion, he might well be dismayed when he found himself hurled aside or borne backwards by an eddy; while the spectator could see that the apparent backward movement was but a delusion, since even the little eddies were all being swept onwards with the rest. It is no exaggeration to say that as is the knowledge of the microbe struggling in the stream to that of the man looking down upon it, so is the comprehension of life possessed by the man in the world to that of one who knows its hidden side.

Best of all, though not so easy to follow because of the effort of imagination involved, is the parable offered to us by Mr. Hinton in his *Scientific Romances*. For purposes connected with his argument Mr. Hinton supposes the construction of a large vertical wooden frame, from top to bottom of which are tightly stretched a multitude of threads at all sorts of angles. If then a sheet of paper be inserted horizontally in the frame so that these threads pass through it, it is obvious that each thread will make a minute hole in the paper. If then the frame as a whole be moved slowly upwards,

but the paper kept still, various effects will be produced. When a thread is perpendicular it will slip through its hole without difficulty, but when a thread is fixed at an angle it will cut a slit in the paper as the frame moves.

Suppose instead of a sheet of paper we have a thin sheet of wax, and let the wax be sufficiently viscous to close up behind the moving thread. Then instead of a number of slits we shall have a number of *moving holes*, and to a sight which cannot see the threads that cause them, the movement of these holes will necessarily appear irregular and inexplicable. Some will approach one another, some will recede; various patterns and combinations will be formed and dissolve, all depending upon the arrangement of the invisible threads. Now, by a still more daring flight of fancy, think not of the holes but of the minute sections of thread for the moment filling them, and imagine those sections as conscious atoms. They think of themselves as separate entities, they find themselves moving without their own volition in what seems a maze of inextricable confusion, and this bewildering dance is life as they know it.

Yet all this apparent complexity and aimless motion is in fact a delusion caused by the limitation of the consciousness of those atoms, for only *one* extremely simple movement is really taking place—the steady upward motion of the frame as a whole. But the atom can never comprehend that until it realises that it is not a separated fragment, but *part of a thread*.

‘Which things are an allegory,’ and a very beautiful one; for the threads are ourselves—our true selves, our souls—and the atoms represent us in this earthly life. So long as we confine our consciousness to the atom, and look on life only from this earthly standpoint, we can never understand what is happening in the world. But if we will raise our consciousness to the point of view of the soul, the thread of which the bodily life is only a minute part and a temporary expression, we shall then see that there is a splendid simplicity at the back of all the complexity, a unity behind all the diversity. The complexity and the diversity are illusions produced by our limitations; the simplicity and the unity are real.

The world in which we live has a hidden side to it, for the conception of it in

the mind of the ordinary man in the street is utterly imperfect along three quite distinct lines. First, it has an extension at its own level which he is at present quite incapable of appreciating; secondly, it has a higher side which is too refined for his undeveloped perceptions; thirdly, it has a meaning and a purpose of which he usually has not the faintest glimpse. To say that we do not see the whole of our world is to state the case far too feebly; what we see is an absolutely insignificant part of it, beautiful though that part may be. And just as the additional extension is infinite compared to our idea of space, and cannot be expressed in its terms, so are the scope and the splendour of the whole infinitely greater than any conception that can possibly be formed of it here, and they cannot be expressed in any terms of that part of the world which we know.

THE FOURTH DIMENSION

The extension spoken of under the first head has often been called the fourth dimension. Many writers have scoffed at this and denied its existence, yet for all

that it remains a fact that our physical world is in truth a world of many dimensions, and that every object in it has an extension, however minute, in a direction which is unthinkable to us at our present stage of mental evolution. When we develop astral senses we are brought so much more directly into contact with this extension that our minds are more or less forced into recognition of it, and the more intelligent gradually grow to understand it; though there are those of less intellectual growth who, even after death and in the astral world, cling desperately to their accustomed limitations and adopt most extraordinary and irrational hypotheses to avoid admitting the existence of the higher life which they so greatly fear.

Because the easiest way for most people to arrive at a realisation of the fourth dimension of space is to develop within themselves the power of astral sight, many persons have come to suppose that the fourth dimension is an exclusive appanage of the astral world. A little thought will show that this cannot be so. Fundamentally there is only one kind of matter existing in the universe, although we call it physical,

astral or mental according to the extent of its subdivision and the rapidity of its vibration. Consequently the dimensions of space—if they exist at all—exist independently of the matter which lies within them; and whether that space has three dimensions or four or more, all the matter within it exists subject to those conditions, whether we are able to appreciate them or not.

It may perhaps help us a little in trying to understand this matter if we realise that which we call space is a limitation of consciousness, and that there is a higher level at which a sufficiently developed consciousness is entirely free from this. We may invest this higher consciousness with the power of expression in any number of directions, and may then assume that each descent into a denser world of matter imposes upon it an additional limitation, and shuts off the perception of one of these directions. We may suppose that by the time the consciousness has descended as far as the mental world only five of these directions remain to it; that when it descends or moves outward once more to the astral level it loses yet one more of its powers, and so is limited to the conception

of four dimensions ; then the further descent or outward movement which brings it into the physical world cuts off from it the possibility of grasping even that fourth dimension, and so we find ourselves confined to the three with which we are familiar.

Looking at it from this point of view, it is clear that the conditions of the universe have remained unaffected, though our power of appreciating them has changed ; so that, although it is true that when our consciousness is functioning through astral matter we are able to appreciate a fourth dimension which normally is hidden from us while we work through the physical brain, we must not therefore make the mistake of thinking that the fourth dimension belongs to the astral world only and that physical matter exists somehow in a different kind of space from the astral or mental. Such a suggestion is shown to be unjustified by the fact that it is possible for a man using his physical brain to attain by means of practice the power of comprehending some of the four-dimensional forms.

I do not wish here to take up fully the consideration of this fascinating subject ;

those who would follow it further should apply themselves to the works of Mr. C. H. Hinton—*Scientific Romances* and *The Fourth Dimension*—the former book for all the interesting possibilities connected with this study, and the latter for the means whereby the mind can realise the fourth dimension as a fact. For our present purposes it is necessary only to indicate that here is an aspect or extension of our world which, though utterly unknown to the vast majority of men, requires to be studied and to be taken into consideration by those who wish to understand the whole of life instead of only a tiny fragment of it.

THE HIGHER WORLD

There is a hidden side to our physical world in a second and higher sense which is well known to all students of Theosophy, for many lectures have been delivered and many books have been written in the endeavour to describe the astral and mental worlds—the unseen realm which interpenetrates that with which we are all familiar, and forms by far the most important part of it. A good deal of information about this higher

aspect of our world has been given in the fifth and the sixth of the Theosophical manuals, and in my own book upon *The Other Side of Death*; so here I need do no more than make a short general statement for the benefit of any reader who has not yet met with those works.

Modern physicists tell us that matter is interpenetrated by ether—a hypothetical substance which they endow with many apparently contradictory qualities. The occultist knows that there are many varieties of this finer interpenetrative matter, and that some of the qualities attributed to it by the scientific men belong not to it at all, but to the primordial substance of which it is the negation. I do not wish here to turn aside from the object of this book to give a lengthy disquisition upon the qualities of ether; those who wish to study this subject may be referred to the book upon *Occult Chemistry*, page 93. Here it must suffice to say that the true æther of space exists, just as scientific men have supposed, and possesses most of the curious contradictory qualities ascribed to it. It is not, however, of that æther itself, but of matter built up out of the bubbles in it, that the inner worlds

of finer matter are built, of which we have spoken just now. That with which we are concerned at the moment is the fact that all the matter visible to us is interpenetrated not only by æther, but also by various kinds of finer matter, and that of this finer matter there are many degrees.

To the type which is nearest to the physical world occult students have given the name astral matter; the kind next above that has been called mental, because out of its texture is built that mechanism of consciousness which is commonly called the mind in man; and there are other types finer still, with which for the moment we are not concerned. Every portion of space with which we have to do must be thought of as containing all these different kinds of matter. It is practically a scientific postulate that even in the densest forms of matter no two particles ever touch one another, but each floats alone in its field of ether, like a sun in space. Just in the same way each particle of the physical ether floats in a sea of astral matter, and each astral particle in turn floats in a mental ocean; so that all these additional worlds need no more space than does this fragment which

we know, for in truth they are all parts of one and the same world.

Man has within himself matter of these finer grades, and by learning to focus his consciousness in it, instead of only in his physical brain, he may become cognisant of these inner and higher parts of the world, and acquire much knowledge of the deepest interest and value. The nature of this unseen world, its scenery, its inhabitants, its possibilities, are described in the works above mentioned. It is the existence of these higher realms of nature that makes occultism possible; and few indeed are the departments of life in which their influence has not to be considered. From the cradle to the grave we are in close relation with them during what we call our waking life; during sleep and after death we are even more intimately connected with them, for our existence is then almost confined to them.

Perhaps the greatest of the many fundamental changes which are inevitable for the man who studies the facts of life is that which is produced in his attitude towards death. This matter has been fully treated elsewhere; here I need state only that the

knowledge of the truth about death robs it of all its terror and much of its sorrow, and enables us to see it in its true proportion and to understand its place in the scheme of our evolution. It is perfectly possible to learn to *know* about all these things instead of accepting beliefs blindly at second-hand, as most people do; and knowledge means power, security and happiness.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

The third aspect of our world which is hidden from the majority is the plan and purpose of existence. Most men seem to muddle through life without any discernible object, except possibly the purely physical struggle to make money or attain power, because they vaguely think that these things will bring them happiness. They have no definite theory as to why they are here, nor any certainty as to the future that awaits them. They have not even realised that they are souls and not bodies, and that as such their development is part of a mighty scheme of cosmic evolution.

When once this grandest of truths has dawned upon a man's horizon there comes

over him that change which occidental religion calls conversion—a fine word which has been sadly degraded by improper associations, for it has often been used to signify nothing more than a crisis of emotion hypnotically induced by the surging waves of excited feeling radiated by a half-maddened crowd. Its true meaning is exactly what its derivation implies, ‘a turning together with’. Before it, the man, unaware of the stupendous current of evolution, has, under the delusion of selfishness, been fighting against it; but the moment that the magnificence of the Divine Plan bursts upon his astonished sight there is no other possibility for him but to throw all his energies into the effort to promote its fulfilment, to ‘turn and go together with’ that splendid stream of the love and the wisdom of God.

His one object then is to qualify himself to help the world, and all his thoughts and actions are directed towards that aim. He may forget for the moment under the stress of temptation, but the oblivion can be only temporary; and this is the meaning of the ecclesiastical dogma that the elect can never finally fail. Discrimination

has come to him, the opening of the doors of the mind, to adopt the terms employed for this change in older faiths; he knows now what is real and what is unreal, what is worth gaining and what is valueless. He lives as an immortal soul who is a Spark of the divine Fire, instead of as one of the beasts that perish—to use a biblical phrase which, however, is entirely incorrect, inasmuch as the beasts do *not* perish, except in the sense of their being reabsorbed into their group-soul.

Most truly for this man an aspect of life has been displayed which erst was hidden from his eyes. It would even be truer to say that now for the first time he has really begun to live, while before he merely dragged out an inefficient existence.

Second Section



How we are Influence

CHAPTER III

BY PLANETS

RADIATIONS

THE first fact which it is necessary for us to realise is that everything is radiating influence on its surroundings, and these surroundings are all the while returning the compliment by pouring influence upon it in return. Literally everything—sun, moon, stars, angels, men, animals, trees, rocks—*everything* is pouring out a ceaseless stream of vibrations, each of its own characteristic type; not in the physical world only, but in other and subtler worlds as well. Our physical senses can appreciate only a limited number of such radiations. We readily feel the heat poured forth by the sun or by a fire, but we are usually not conscious of the fact that we ourselves are constantly radiating heat; yet if we hold out a hand towards a radiometer the delicate instrument

will respond to the heat imparted by that hand even at a distance of several feet, and will begin to revolve. We say that a rose has a scent and that a daisy has none; yet the daisy is throwing off particles just as much as the rose, only in the one case they happen to be perceptible to our senses, and in the other they are not.

From early ages men have believed that the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars exercised a certain influence over human life. In the present day most people are content to laugh at such a belief, without knowing anything about it; yet anyone who will take the trouble to make a careful and impartial study of astrology will discover much that cannot be lightly thrown aside. He will meet with plenty of errors, no doubt, some of them ridiculous enough; but he will also find a proportion of accurate results which is far too large to be reasonably ascribed to coincidence. His investigations will convince him that there is unquestionably some foundation for the claims of the astrologers, while at the same time he cannot but observe that their systems are as yet far from perfect.

When we remember the enormous space that separates us from even the nearest of

the planets, it is at once obvious that we must reject the idea that they can exercise upon us any physical action worth considering; and furthermore, if there were any such action, it would seem that its strength should depend less upon the position of the planet in the sky than upon its proximity to the earth—a factor which is not usually taken into account by astrologers. The more we contemplate the matter the less does it seem rational or possible to suppose that the planets can affect the earth or its inhabitants to any appreciable extent; yet the fact remains that a theory based upon this apparent impossibility often works out accurately. Perhaps the explanation may be found along the line that just as the movement of the hands of a clock shows the passage of time, though it does not cause it, so the motions of the planets indicate the prevalence of certain influences, but are in no way responsible for them. Let us see what light occult study throws upon this somewhat perplexing subject.

THE DEITY OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Occult students regard the entire solar system in all its vast complexity as a partial

manifestation of one great living Being, and all its parts as expressing aspects of Him. Many names have been given to Him; in our Theosophical literature He has often been described under the Gnostic title of the Logos—the Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God; but now we usually speak of Him as the Solar Deity. All the physical constituents of the solar system—the sun with its wonderful corona, all the planets with their satellites, their oceans, their atmospheres and the various ethers surrounding them—all these are collectively His physical body, the expression of Him in the physical realm.

In the same way the collective astral worlds—not only the astral worlds belonging to each of the physical planets, but also the purely astral planets of all the chains of the system (such, for example, as planets B and F of our chain)—make up His astral body, and the collective worlds of the mental realm are His mental body—the vehicle through which He manifests Himself upon that particular level. Every atom of every world is a centre through which He is conscious, so that not only is it true that God is

omnipresent, but also that whatever is is God.

Thus we see that the old pantheistic conception was quite true, yet it is only a part of the truth, because while all nature in all its worlds is nothing but His garment, yet He Himself exists outside of and above all this in a stupendous life of which we can know nothing—a life among other Rulers of other systems. Just as all our lives are lived literally within Him and are in truth a part of His, so His life and that of the Solar Deities of countless other systems are a part of a still greater life of the Deity of the visible universe; and if there be in the depths of space yet other universes invisible to us, all of their Deities in turn must in the same way form part of One Great Consciousness which includes the whole.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF MATTER

In these 'bodies' of the Solar Deity on their various levels there are certain different classes or types of matter, which are fairly equally distributed over the whole system. I am not speaking here of our

usual division of the worlds and their sub-sections—a division which is made according to the density of the matter, so that in the physical world, for example, we have the solid, liquid, gaseous, etheric, super-etheric, sub-atomic and atomic conditions of matter—all of them physical, but differing in density. The types which I mean constitute a totally distinct series of cross-divisions, each of which contains matter in all its different conditions, so that if we denote the various types by numbers, we shall find solid, liquid and gaseous matter of the first type, solid, liquid and gaseous matter of the second type, and so on all the way through.

These types of matter are as thoroughly intermingled as are the constituents of our atmosphere. Conceive a room filled with air; any decided vibration communicated to the air, such as a sound, for example, would be perceptible in every part of the room. Suppose that it were possible to produce some kind of undulation which should affect the oxygen alone without disturbing the nitrogen, that undulation would still be felt in every part of the room. If we allow that, for a moment, the proportion of oxygen might be greater in one part of

the room than another, then the oscillation, though perceptible everywhere, would be strongest in that part. Just as the air in a room is composed (principally) of oxygen and nitrogen, so is the matter of the solar system composed of these different types; and just as a wave (if there could be such a thing) which affected only the oxygen or only the nitrogen would nevertheless be felt in all parts of the room, so a movement or modification which affects only one of these types produces an effect throughout the entire solar system, though it may be stronger in one part than in another.

This statement is true of all worlds, but for the sake of clearness let us for the moment confine our thought to one world only. Perhaps the idea is easiest to follow with regard to the astral. It has often been explained that, in the astral body of man, matter belonging to each of the astral sub-sections is to be found, and that the proportion between the denser and the finer kinds shows how far that body is capable of responding to coarse or refined desires, and so is to some extent an indication of the degree to which the man

has evolved himself. Similarly in each astral body there is matter of each of these types, and in this case the proportion between them will show the disposition of the man—whether he is devotional or philosophic, artistic or scientific, pragmatic or mystic.

THE LIVING CENTRES

Now each of these types of matter in the astral body of the Solar Deity is to some extent a separate vehicle, and may be thought of as also the astral body of a subsidiary Deity or Minister, who is at the same time an aspect of the Deity of the system, a kind of ganglion or force-centre in Him. Indeed, if these types differ among themselves, it is because the matter composing them originally came forth through these different living Centres, and the matter of each type is still the special vehicle and expression of the subsidiary Deity through whom it came, so that the slightest thought, movement or alteration of any kind in Him is instantly reflected in some way or other in all the matter of the corresponding type. Naturally each such type of matter has its own special affinities, and is

capable of vibrating under influences which may probably evoke no response from the other types.

Since every man has within himself matter of *all* these types, it is obvious that any modification in or action of any one of these great living Centres must to some degree affect all beings in the system. The extent to which any particular person is so affected depends upon the proportion of the type of matter acted upon which he happens to have in his astral body. Consequently we find different types of men as of matter, and by reason of their constitution, by the very composition of their astral bodies, some of them are more susceptible to one influence, some to another.

The types are seven, and astrologers have often given to them the names of certain of the planets. Each type is divided into seven sub-types, because each 'planet' may be either practically uninfluenced, or it may be affected predominantly by any one of the other six. In addition to the forty-nine definite sub-types thus obtained, there are any number of possible permutations and combinations of influences, often so complicated that it is no easy matter to follow

them. Nevertheless, this gives us a certain system of classification, according to which we can arrange not only human beings, but also the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, and the elemental essence which precedes them in evolution.

Everything in the solar system belongs to one or other of these seven great streams, because it has come out through one or other of these great Force-Centres, to which therefore it belongs in essence, although it must inevitably be affected more or less by the others also. This gives each man, each animal, each plant, each mineral a certain fundamental characteristic which never changes—sometimes symbolised as his note, his colour or his ray.

This characteristic is permanent not only through one chain-period, but through the whole planetary scheme, so that the life which manifests through elemental essence of type A will in the due course of its evolution ensoul successively minerals, plants, and animals of type A; and when its group-soul breaks up into units and receives the Third Outpouring, the human beings which are the result of its evolution will be men of type A and no other, and under

normal conditions will continue so all through their development until they grow into Adepts of type A.

In the earlier days of Theosophical study we were under the impression that this plan was carried out consistently to the very end, and that these Adepts rejoined the Solar Deity through the same subsidiary Deity or Minister through whom they originally came forth. Further research shows that this thought requires modification. We find that bands of egos of many different types join themselves together for a common object.

For example, in the investigations connected primarily with the lives of Alcyone it was found that certain bands of egos circled round the various Masters, and came closer and closer to Them as time went on. One by one, as they became fit for it, these egos reached the stage at which they were accepted as pupils or apprentices by one or other of the Masters. To become truly a pupil of a Master means entering into relations with Him whose intimacy is far beyond any tie of which we know on earth. It means a degree of union with Him which no words can fully express, although at the same time

a pupil retains absolutely his own individuality and his own initiative.

In this way each Master becomes a centre of what may be truly described as a great organism, since his pupils are veritably members of Him. When we realise that He Himself is in just the same way a Member of some still greater Master we arrive at a conception of a mighty organism which is in a very real sense *one*, although built up of thousands of perfectly distinct egos.

Such an organism is the Heavenly Man who emerges as the result of the evolution of each great root-race. In Him, as in an earthly man, are seven great centres, each of which is a mighty Adept; and the Manu and the Bodhisattva occupy in this great organism the place of the brain and the heart centres respectively. Round Them—and yet not *round* Them, but *in* Them and part of Them, although so fully and gloriously ourselves—shall we Their servants be; and this great figure in its totality represents the flower of that particular race, and includes all who have attained Adeptship through it. Each root-race is thus represented at its close by one of

these Heavenly Men; and They, these splendid totalities, will, as Their next stage in evolution, become Ministers Themselves of some future Solar Deity. Yet each one of these contains within Himself men of all possible types, so that each of these future Ministers is in truth a representative not of one line but of all lines.

When looked at from a sufficiently high level the whole solar system is seen to consist of these great living Centres or Ministers, and the types of matter through which each is expressing Himself. Let me repeat here, for the sake of clearness, what I wrote some time ago on this subject in *The Inner Life*, vol. i, page 217 :

“Each of these great living Centres has a sort of orderly periodic change or motion of His own, corresponding perhaps on some infinitely higher level to the regular beating of the human heart, or to the inspiration and expiration of the breath. Some of these periodic changes are more rapid than others, so that a complicated series of effects is produced; and it has been observed that the movements of the physical planets in their relation to one another furnish a clue to the operation of these influences at any

given moment. Each of these Centres has His special location or major focus within the body of the sun, and a minor exterior focus which is always marked by the position of a planet.

“The exact relation can hardly be made clear in our three-dimensional phraseology; but we may perhaps put it that each Centre has a field of influence practically co-extensive with the solar system; that if a section of this field could be taken it would be found to be elliptical; and that one of the foci of each ellipse would always be the sun, and the other would be the special planet ruled by that Minister. It is probable that, in the gradual condensation of the original glowing nebula from which the system was formed, the location of the planets was determined by the formation of vortices at these minor foci, they being auxiliary points of distribution of these influences—ganglia, as it were, in the solar system.”

It must of course be understood that we are referring here not to the curious astrological theory which considers the sun himself as a planet, but to the real planets which revolve round him.

THEIR INFLUENCE

The influences belonging to these great types differ widely in quality, and one way in which this difference shows itself is in their action upon the living elemental essence both in man and around him. Be it ever remembered that this dominance is exerted in *all* worlds, not only in the astral, though we are just now confining ourselves to that for simplicity's sake. These mysterious agencies may have, and indeed must have, other and more important lines of action not at present known to us; but this at least forces itself upon the notice of the observer, that each Centre produces its own special effect upon the manifold varieties of elemental essence.

One, for example, will be found greatly to stimulate the activity and the vitality of those kinds of essence which specially appertain to the Centre through which it comes, while apparently checking and controlling others; the sway of another type will be seen to be strong over a quite different set of essences which belong to its Centre, while apparently not affecting the previous set in the least. There are

all sorts of combinations and permutations of these mystic powers, the action of one of them being in some cases greatly intensified and in others almost neutralised by the presence of another.

Since this elemental essence is vividly active in the astral and mental bodies of man, it is clear that any unusual excitation of any of these classes of that essence—any sudden increase in its activity—must undoubtedly affect to some extent either his emotions or his mind, or both; and it is also obvious that these forces would work differently on different men, because of the varieties of essence entering into their composition.

These influences neither exist nor are exercised for the sake of the man or with any reference to him, any more than the wind exists for the sake of the vessel which is helped or hindered by it; they are part of the play of cosmic forces of whose object we know nothing, though we may to some extent learn how to calculate upon them and to use them. Such energies in themselves are no more good nor evil than any other of the powers of nature; like electricity or any other great natural

force they may be helpful or hurtful to us, according to the use that we make of them. Just as certain experiments are more likely to be successful if undertaken when the air is heavily charged with electricity, while certain others under such conditions will most probably fail, so an effort involving the use of the powers of our mental and emotional nature will more or less readily achieve its object according to the influences which predominate when it is made.

LIBERTY OF ACTION

It is of the utmost importance for us to understand that such pressure cannot dominate man's will in the slightest degree; all it can do is in some cases to make it easier or more difficult for that will to act along certain lines. In no case can a man be swept away by it into any course of action without his own consent, though he may evidently be helped or hindered by it in any effort that he chances to be making. The really strong man has little need to trouble himself as to the agencies which happen to be in

the ascendant, but for men of weaker will it may sometimes be worth while to know at what moment this or that force can most advantageously be applied. These factors may be put aside as a negligible quantity by the man of iron determination or by the student of true occultism; but since most men still allow themselves to be the helpless sport of the forces of desire, and have not yet developed anything worth calling a will of their own, their feebleness permits these influences to assume an importance in human life to which they have intrinsically no claim.

For example, a certain variety of pressure may occasionally bring about a condition of affairs in which all forms of nervous excitement are considerably intensified, and there is consequently a general sense of irritability abroad. That condition cannot cause a quarrel between sensible people; but under such circumstances disputes arise far more readily than usual, even on the most trifling pretexts, and the large number of people who seem to be always on the verge of losing their tempers are likely to relinquish all control of themselves on even less than ordinary provocation. It

may sometimes happen that such influences, playing on the smouldering discontent of ignorant jealousy, may fan it into an outburst of popular frenzy from which wide-spread disaster may ensue.

Even in such a case as this we must guard ourselves against the fatal mistake of supposing the influence to be evil because man's passions turn it to evil effect. The force itself is simply a wave of activity sent forth from one of the Centres of the Deity, and is in itself of the nature of an intensification of certain vibrations—necessary perhaps to produce some far-reaching cosmic effect. The increased activity produced incidentally by its means in the astral body of a man offers him an opportunity of testing his power to manage his vehicles; and whether he succeeds or fails in this, it is still one of the lessons which help in his evolution. Karma may throw a man into certain surroundings or bring him under certain influences, but it can never force him to commit a crime, though it may so place him that it requires great determination on his part to avoid that crime. It is possible therefore for an astrologer to warn a man of the circumstances under

which at a given time he will find himself, but any definite prophecy as to his action under those circumstances can only be based upon probabilities—though we may readily recognise how nearly such prophecies become certainties in the case of the ordinary will-less man. From the extraordinary mixture of success and failure which characterise modern astrological predictions, it seems fairly certain that the practitioners of this art are not fully acquainted with all the necessary factors. In a case into which only those factors enter which are already fairly well understood, success is achieved; but in cases where unrecognised factors come into play we have naturally more or less complete failure as the result.

CHAPTER IV

BY THE SUN

THE HEAT OF THE SUN

THOSE who are interested in astronomy will find the occult side of that science one of the most fascinating studies within our reach. Obviously it would be at once too recondite and too technical for inclusion in such a book as this, which is concerned more immediately with such of the unseen phenomena as affect us practically in our daily life; but the connection of the sun with that life is so intimate that it is necessary that a few words should be said about him.

The whole solar system is truly the garment of its Deity, but the sun is His veritable epiphany—the nearest that we can come in the physical realm to a manifestation of Him, the lens through which His power shines forth upon us.

Regarded purely from the physical point of view, the sun is a vast mass of glowing matter at almost inconceivably high temperatures, and in a condition of electrification so intense as to be altogether beyond our experience. Astronomers, supposing his heat to be due merely to contraction, used to calculate how long he must have existed in the past, and how long it would be possible for him to maintain it in the future; and they found themselves unable to allow more than a few hundred thousand years either way, while the geologists on the other hand claim that on this earth alone we have evidence of processes extending over millions of years. The discovery of radium has upset the older theories, but even with its aid they have not yet risen to the simplicity of the real explanation of the difficulty.

One can imagine some intelligent microbe living in or upon a human body and arguing about its temperature in precisely the same way. He might say that it must of course be a gradually cooling body, and he might calculate with exactitude that in so many hours or minutes it must reach a temperature that would render continued

existence impossible for him. If he lived long enough, however, he would find that the human body did *not* cool, as according to his theories it should do, and no doubt this would seem to him very mysterious, unless and until he discovered that he was dealing not with a dying fire but with a living being, and that as long as the life remained the temperature would not sink. In exactly the same way if we realise that the sun is the physical manifestation of the Solar Deity we shall see that the mighty life behind it will assuredly keep up its temperature, as long as may be necessary for the full evolution of the system.

THE WILLOW-LEAVES

A similar explanation offers us a solution of some of the other problems of solar physics. For example, the phenomena called from their shape the 'willow-leaves' or 'rice-grains,' of which the photosphere of the sun is practically composed, have often puzzled exoteric students by the apparently irreconcilable characteristics which they present. From their position they can be nothing else than masses of glowing gas at

an exceedingly high temperature, and therefore of great tenuity; yet though they must be far lighter than any terrestrial cloud, they never fail to maintain their peculiar shape, however wildly they may be tossed about in the very midst of storms of power so tremendous that they would instantly destroy the earth itself.

When we realise that behind each of these strange objects there is a splendid Life—that each may be considered as the physical body of a great Angel—we comprehend that it is that Life which holds them together and gives them their wonderful stability. To apply to them the term physical body may perhaps mislead us, because for us the life in the physical seems of so much importance and occupies so prominent a position in the present stage of our evolution. Madame Blavatsky has told us that we cannot truly describe them as solar inhabitants, since the Solar Beings will hardly place themselves in telescopic focus, but that they are the reservoirs of solar vital energy, themselves partaking of the life which they pour forth.

Let us say rather that the willow-leaves are manifestations upon the physical level

maintained by the solar Angels for a special purpose, at the cost of a certain sacrifice or limitation of their activities on the higher levels which are their normal habitat. Remembering that it is through these willow-leaves that the light, heat and vitality of the sun come to us, we may readily see that the object of this sacrifice is to bring down to the physical level certain forces which would otherwise remain unmanifested, and that these great Angels are acting as channels, as reflectors, as specializers of divine power—that they are in fact doing at cosmic levels and for a solar system what, if we are wise enough to use our privileges, we ourselves may do on a microscopical scale in our own little circle, as will be seen in a later chapter.

VITALITY

We all know the feeling of cheerfulness and well-being which sunlight brings to us, but only students of occultism are fully aware of the reasons for that sensation. Just as the sun floods his system with light and heat, so does he perpetually pour out into it another force as yet unsuspected

by modern science—a force to which has been given the name ‘vitality’. This is radiated on all levels, and manifests itself in each realm—physical, emotional, mental and the rest—but we are specially concerned for the moment with its appearance in the lowest, where it enters some of the physical atoms, immensely increases their activity, and makes them animated and glowing.

We must not confuse this force with electricity, though it in some ways resembles it. The Deity sends forth from Himself three great forms of energy; there may be hundreds more of which we know nothing; but at least there are three. Each of them has its appropriate manifestation at every level which our students have yet reached; but for the moment let us think of them as they show themselves in the physical world. One of them exhibits itself as electricity, another as vitality, and the third as the serpent-fire, of which I have already written in *The Inner Life*.

These three remain distinct, and none of them can at this level be converted into either of the others. They have no connection with any of the Three Great

Outpourings; all of those are definite efforts made by the Solar Deity, while these seem rather to be results of His life—His qualities in manifestation without any visible effort. Electricity, while it is rushing through the atoms, deflects them and holds them in a certain way—this effect being in addition to and quite apart from the special rate of vibration which it also imparts to them.

But the action of vitality differs in many ways from that of electricity, light or heat. Any of the variants of this latter force cause oscillation of the atom as a whole—an oscillation the size of which is enormous as compared with that of the atom; but this other force which we call vitality comes to the atom not from without, but from within.

THE VITALITY GLOBULE

The atom is itself nothing but the manifestation of a force; the Solar Deity wills a certain shape which we call an ultimate physical atom, and by that effort of His will some fourteen thousand million bubbles are held in that particular form. It is necessary to emphasize the fact that the cohesion of the

bubbles in that form is entirely dependent upon that effort of will, so that if that were for a single instant withdrawn, the bubbles must fall apart again, and the whole physical realm would simply cease to exist in far less than the period of a flash of lightning. So true is it that the whole world is nothing but illusion, even from this point of view, to say nothing of the fact that the bubbles of which the atom is built are themselves only holes in koilon, the true æther of space.

So it is the will-force of the Solar Deity continually exercised which holds the atom together as such; and when we try to examine the action of that force we see that it does not come into the atom from outside, but wells up within it—which means that it enters it from higher dimensions. The same is true with regard to this other force which we call vitality; it enters the atom from within along with the force that holds that atom together, instead of acting upon it entirely from without, as do those other varieties of force which we call light, heat or electricity.

When vitality wells up thus within the atom it endows it with an additional life,

and gives it a power of attraction, so that it immediately draws round it six other atoms, which it arranges in a definite form, thus making what has been called in *Occult Chemistry* a hyper-meta-*proto*-element. But this element differs from all others which have so far been observed, in that the force which creates it and holds it together comes from the second Aspect of the Solar Deity instead of from the third. This vitality-globule is drawn upon page 45 of *Occult Chemistry*, where it stands first at the left hand of the top line in the diagram. It is the little group which makes the exceedingly brilliant bead upon the male or positive snake in the chemical element oxygen, and it is also the heart of the central globe in radium.

These globules are conspicuous above all others which may be seen floating in the atmosphere, on account of their brilliance and extreme activity—the intensely vivid life which they show. These are probably the fiery lives so often mentioned by Madame Blavatsky, though she appears to employ that term in two senses. In *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. ii, 709, it seems to mean the globule as a whole, while in vol. i, 283, it probably

means the original additionally-vitalised atoms, each of which draws round itself six others.

While the force that vivifies these globules is quite different from light, it nevertheless appears to depend upon light for its power of manifestation. In brilliant sunshine this vitality is constantly welling up afresh, and the globules are generated with great rapidity and in incredible numbers; but in cloudy weather there is a great diminution in the number of globules formed, and during the night the operation appears to be entirely suspended. During the night, therefore, we may be said to be living upon the stock manufactured during the previous day, and though it appears practically impossible that it should ever be entirely exhausted, that stock evidently does run low when there is a long succession of cloudy days. The globule, once charged, remains as a sub-atomic element, and does not appear to be subject to any change or loss of force unless and until it is absorbed by some living creature.

THE ABSORPTION OF VITALITY

This vitality is absorbed by all living organisms, and a sufficient supply of it seems

to be a necessity of their existence. In the case of men and the higher animals it is absorbed through the centre or vortex in the etheric double which corresponds with the spleen. It will be remembered that that centre has six petals, made by the undulatory movement of the forces which cause the vortex. But this undulatory movement is itself caused by the radiation of other forces from the centre of that vortex. Imaging the central point of the vortex as the hub of a wheel, we may think of these last-mentioned forces as represented by spokes radiating from it in straight lines. Then the vortical forces, sweeping round and round, pass alternately under and over these spokes as though they were weaving a kind of etheric basket-work, and in this way is obtained the appearance of six petals separated by depressions.

When the unit of vitality is flashing about in the atmosphere, brilliant as it is, it is almost colourless, and may be compared to white light. But as soon as it is drawn into the vortex of the force-centre at the spleen it is decomposed and breaks up into streams of different colours, though it does not follow exactly our division of

the spectrum. As its component atoms are whirled round the vortex, each of the six spokes seizes upon one of them, so that all the atoms charged with yellow rush along one, and all those charged with green along another, and so on, while the seventh disappears through the centre of the vortex—through the hub of the wheel, as it were. These rays then rush off in different directions, each to do its special work in the vitalisation of the body. As I have said, however, the divisions are not exactly those which we ordinarily use in the solar spectrum, but rather resemble the arrangement of colours which we see on higher levels in the causal, mental and astral bodies.

For example, what we call indigo is divided between the violet ray and the blue ray, so that we find only two divisions there instead of three; but on the other hand what we call red is divided into two—rose red and dark red. The six radiants are therefore violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, and dark red; while the seventh or rose red atom (more properly the first, since this is the original atom in which the force first appeared) passes down through the centre of the vortex. Vitality is thus clearly

seven-fold in its constitution, but it rushes through the body in five main streams, as has been described in some of the Indian books, for after issuing from the splenic centre the blue and the violet join into one ray, and so do the orange and the dark red.

(1) The violet-blue ray flashes upwards to the throat, where it seems to divide itself, the light blue remaining to course through and vivify the throat-centre, while the dark blue and violet pass on into the brain. The dark blue expends itself in the lower and central parts of the brain, while the violet floods the upper part and appears to give special vigour to the force-centre at the top of the head, diffusing itself chiefly through the nine hundred and sixty petals of the outer part of that centre.

(2) The yellow ray is directed to the heart, but after doing its work there part of it also passes on to the brain and permeates it, directing itself principally to the twelve-petalled flower in the midst of the highest force-centre.

¹ "To them spoke the principal life: Be not lost in delusion. I even, fivefold dividing myself, uphold this body by my support." *Prashnopanishad*, ii, 3. "From this proceed these seven flames." *Ibid.* iii, 5.

(3) The green ray floods the abdomen, and while centring especially in the solar plexus, evidently vivifies the liver, kidneys and intestines, and the digestive apparatus generally.

(4) The rose-coloured ray runs all over the body along the nerves, and is clearly the life of the nervous system. This is what is commonly described as vitality—the specialized vitality which one man may readily pour into another in whom it is deficient. If the nerves are not fully supplied with this rosy light they become sensitive and intensely irritable, so that the patient finds it almost impossible to remain in one position, and yet gains but little ease when he moves to another. The least noise or touch is agony to him, and he is in a condition of acute misery. The flooding of his nerves with specialized vitality by some healthy person brings instant relief, and a feeling of healing and peace descends upon him. A man in robust health usually absorbs and specializes so much more vitality than is actually needed by his own body that he is constantly radiating a torrent of rose-coloured atoms, and so unconsciously pours strength

upon his weaker fellows without losing anything himself; or by an effort of his will he can gather together this superfluous energy and aim it intentionally at one whom he wishes to help.

The physical body has a certain blind instinctive consciousness of its own, corresponding in the physical world to the desire-elemental of the astral body; and this consciousness seeks always to protect it from danger, or to procure for it whatever may be necessary. This is entirely apart from the consciousness of the man himself, and it works equally well during the absence of the ego from the physical body during sleep. All our instinctive movements are due to it, and it is through its activity that the working of the sympathetic system is carried on ceaselessly without any thought or knowledge on our part.

While we are what we call awake, this physical elemental is perpetually occupied in self-defence; he is in a condition of constant vigilance, and he keeps the nerves and muscles always tense. During the night or at any time when we sleep he lets the nerves and muscles relax, and devotes himself specially to the assimilation of vitality, and the

recuperation of the physical body. He works at this most successfully during the early part of the night, because then there is plenty of vitality, whereas immediately before the dawn the vitality which has been left behind by the sunlight is almost completely exhausted. This is the reason for the feeling of limpness and deadness associated with the small hours of the morning; this is also the reason why sick men so frequently die at that particular time. The same idea is embodied in the old proverb that "An hour's sleep before midnight is worth two after it." The work of this physical elemental accounts for the strong recuperative influence of sleep, which is often observable even when it is a mere momentary nap.

This vitality is indeed the food of the etheric double, and is just as necessary to it as is sustenance to the grosser part of the physical body. Hence when the body is unable for any reason (as through sickness, fatigue or extreme old age) to prepare vitality for the nourishment of its cells, this physical elemental endeavours to draw in for his own use vitality which has already been prepared in the bodies of others;

and thus it happens that we often find ourselves weak and exhausted after sitting for a while with a person who is depleted of vitality, because he has drawn away from us by suction the rose-coloured atoms before we were able to extract their energy.

The vegetable kingdom also absorbs this vitality, but seems in most cases to use only a small part of it. Many trees draw from it almost exactly the same constituents as does the higher part of man's etheric body, the result being that when they have used what they require, the atoms which they reject are precisely those charged with the rose-coloured light which is needed for the cells of man's physical body. This is specially the case with such trees as the pine and the eucalyptus; and consequently the very neighbourhood of these trees gives health and strength to those who are suffering from lack of this part of the vital principle—those whom we call nervous people. They are nervous because the cells of their bodies are hungry, and the nervousness can only be allayed by feeding them; and often the readiest way to do that is thus to supply them from without with the special kind of vitality which they need.

(5) The orange-red ray flows to the base of the spine and thence to the generative organs, with which one part of its functions is closely connected. This ray appears to include not only the orange and the darker reds, but also a certain amount of dark purple, as though the spectrum bent round in a circle and the colours began over again at a lower octave. In the normal man this ray energises the desires of the flesh, and also seems to enter the blood and keep up the heat of the body; but if a man persistently refuses to yield to his lower nature, this ray can by long and determined effort be deflected upwards to the brain, where all three of its constituents undergo a remarkable modification. The orange is raised into pure yellow, and produces a decided intensification of the powers of the intellect; the dark red becomes crimson, and greatly increases the power of unselfish affection; while the dark purple is transmuted into a lovely pale violet, and quickens the spiritual part of man's nature. The man who achieves this transmutation will find that sensual desires no longer trouble him, and when it becomes necessary for him to arouse the serpent-fire he will be free from

the most serious of the dangers of that process. When a man has finally completed this change, this orange-red ray passes straight into the centre at the base of the spine, and from that runs upwards along the hollow of the vertebral column, and so to the brain.

VITALITY AND HEALTH

The flow of vitality in these various currents regulates the health of the parts of the body with which they are concerned. If, for example, a person is suffering from a weak digestion, it manifests itself at once to any person possessing etheric sight, because either the flow and action of the green stream is sluggish or its amount is smaller in proportion than it should be. Where the yellow current is full and strong, it indicates, or more properly produces, strength and regularity in the action of the heart. Flowing round that centre, it also interpenetrates the blood which is driven through it, and is sent along with it all over the body. Yet there is enough of it left to extend into the brain also, and the power of high philosophical and metaphysical thought

appears to depend to a great extent upon the volume and activity of this yellow stream, and the corresponding awakening of the twelve-petalled flower in the middle of the force-centre at the top of the head.

Thought and emotion of a high spiritual type seem to depend largely upon the violet ray, whereas the power of ordinary thought is stimulated by the action of the blue mingled with part of the yellow. It has been observed that in some forms of idiocy the flow of vitality to the brain, both yellow and blue-violet, is almost entirely inhibited. Unusual activity or volume in the light blue which is apportioned to the throat-centre is accompanied by the health and strength of the physical organs in that part of the body. It gives, for example, strength and elasticity to the vocal chords, so that special brilliance and activity are noticeable in the case of a public speaker or a great singer. Weakness or disease in any part of the body is accompanied by a deficiency in the flow of vitality to that part.

As the different streams of atoms do their work, the charge of vitality is withdrawn from them, precisely as an electrical

charge might be. The atoms bearing the rose-coloured ray grow gradually paler as they are swept along the nerves, and are eventually thrown out from the body through the pores—making thus what was called in *Man Visible and Invisible* the health-aura. By the time that they leave the body most of them have lost the rose-coloured light, so that the general appearance of the emanation is bluish-white. That part of the yellow ray which is absorbed into the blood and carried round with it loses its distinctive colour in just the same way.

The atoms, when thus emptied of their charge of vitality, either enter into some of the combinations which are constantly being made in the body, or pass out of it through the pores, or through the ordinary channels. The emptied atoms of the green ray, which is connected chiefly with digestive processes, seem to form part of the ordinary waste material of the body, and to pass out along with it, and that is also the fate of the atoms of the red-orange ray in the case of the ordinary man. The atoms belonging to the blue rays, which are used in connection with the throat-centre, generally leave the body in the

exhalations of the breath; and those which compose the dark blue and violet rays usually pass out from the centre at the top of the head.

When the student has learnt to deflect the orange-red rays so that they also move up through the spine, the empty atoms of both these and the violet-blue rays pour out from the top of the head in a fiery cascade, which is frequently imaged as a flame in ancient statues of the BUDDHA and other great Saints. When empty of the vital force the atoms are once more precisely like any other atoms; the body absorbs such of them as it needs, so that they form part of the various combinations which are constantly being made, while others which are not required for such purposes are cast out through any channel that happens to be convenient.

The flow of vitality into or through any centre, or even its intensification, must not be confused with the entirely different development of the centre which is brought about by the awakening of the serpent-fire at a later stage in man's evolution. We all of us draw in vitality and specialize it, but many of us do not utilise it to the full,

because in various ways our lives are not as pure and healthy and reasonable as they should be. One who coarsens his body by the use of meat, alcohol or tobacco can never employ his vitality to the full in the same way as can a man of purer living. A particular individual of impure life may be, and often is, stronger in the physical body than certain other men who are purer; that is a matter of their respective karma; but other things being equal, the man of pure life has an immense advantage.

VITALITY NOT MAGNETISM

The vitality coursing along the nerves must not be confused with what we usually call the magnetism of the man—his own nerve-fluid, generated within himself. It is this fluid which keeps up the constant circulation of etheric matter along the nerves, corresponding to the circulation of blood through the veins; and as oxygen is conveyed by the blood to all parts of the body, so vitality is conveyed along the nerves by this etheric current. The particles of the etheric part of man's body are constantly changing, just as are those of

the denser part; along with the food which we eat and the air which we breathe we take in etheric matter, and this is assimilated by the etheric part of the body. Etheric matter is constantly being thrown off from the pores, just as is gaseous matter, so that when two persons are close together each necessarily absorbs much of the physical emanations of the other.

When one person mesmerises another, the operator by an effort of will gathers together a great deal of this magnetism and throws it into the subject, pushing back his victim's nerve-fluid, and filling its place with his own. As the brain is the centre of this nervous circulation, this brings that part of the subject's body which is affected under the control of the manipulator's brain instead of the victim's, and so the latter feels what the mesmerist wishes him to feel. If the recipient's brain be emptied of his own magnetism and filled with that of the performer, the former can think and act only as the latter wills that he should think and act; he is for the time entirely dominated.

Even when the magnetiser is trying to cure, and is pouring strength into the man, he inevitably gives along with the vitality much

of his own emanations. It is obvious that any disease which the mesmeriser happens to have may readily be conveyed to the subject in this way; and another even more important consideration is that, though his health may be perfect from the medical point of view, there are mental and moral diseases as well as physical, and that, as astral and mental matter are thrown into the subject by the mesmerist along with the physical current, these also are frequently transferred.

Vitality, like light and heat, is pouring forth from the sun continually, but obstacles frequently arise to prevent the full supply from reaching the earth. In the wintry and melancholy climes miscalled the temperate, it too often happens that for days together the sky is covered by a funereal pall of heavy cloud, and this affects vitality just as it does light; it does not altogether hinder its passage, but sensibly diminishes its amount. Therefore in dull and dark weather vitality runs low, and over all living creatures there comes an instinctive yearning for sunlight.

When vitalised atoms are thus more sparsely scattered, the man in rude health

increases his power of absorption, depletes a larger area, and so keeps his strength at the normal level; but invalids and men of small nerve-force, who cannot do this, often suffer severely, and find themselves growing weaker and more irritable without knowing why. For similar reasons vitality is at a lower ebb in the winter than in the summer, for even if the short winter day be sunny, which is rare, we have still to face the long and dreary winter night, during which we must exist upon such vitality as the day has stored in our atmosphere. On the other hand the long summer day, when bright and cloudless, charges the atmosphere so thoroughly with vitality that its short night makes but little difference.

From the study of this question of vitality, the occultist cannot fail to recognise that, quite apart from temperature, sunlight is one of the most important factors in the attainment and preservation of perfect health—a factor for the absence of which nothing else can entirely compensate. Since this vitality is poured forth not only upon the physical world but upon all others as well, it is evident that, when in other

respects satisfactory conditions are present, emotion, intellect and spirituality will be at their best under clear skies and with the inestimable aid of the sunlight.

All the colours of this order of vitality are etheric, yet it will be seen that their action presents certain correspondences with the signification attached to similar hues in the astral body. Clearly right thought and right feeling re-act upon the physical body, and increase its power to assimilate the vitality which is necessary for its well-being. It is reported that the LORD BUDDHA once said that the first step on the road to Nirvāna is perfect physical health; and assuredly the way to attain that is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path which He has indicated. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"—yes, even physical health as well.

CHAPTER V

BY NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

THE WEATHER

THE vagaries of the weather are proverbial, and though observation and study of its phenomena enable us to venture upon certain limited predictions, the ultimate cause of most of the changes still escapes us, and will continue to do so until we realise that there are considerations to be taken into account besides the action of heat and cold, of radiation and condensation. The earth itself is living; this ball of matter is being used as a physical body by a vast entity—not an Adept or an angel, not a highly developed being at all, but rather something which may be imagined as a kind of gigantic nature-spirit, for whom the existence of our earth is one incarnation. His previous incarnation was naturally in the moon, since that was the fourth planet

of the last chain, and equally naturally his next incarnation will be in the fourth planet of the chain that will succeed ours when the evolution of our terrestrial chain is completed. Of his nature or the character of his evolution we can know but little, nor does it in any way concern us, for we are to him but as tiny microbes or parasites upon his body, and in all probability he is unaware even of our existence, for nothing that we can do can be on a scale large enough to affect him.

For him the atmosphere surrounding the earth must be as a kind of aura, or perhaps rather corresponding to the film of etheric matter which projects ever so slightly beyond the outline of man's dense physical body; and just as any alteration or disturbance in the man affects this film of ether, so must any change of condition in this spirit of the earth affect the atmosphere. Some such changes must be periodic and regular, like the motions produced in us by breathing, by the action of the heart or by an even movement, such as walking; others must be irregular and occasional, as would be the changes produced in a man by a sudden start, or by an outburst of emotion.

We know that violent emotion, astral in its origin though it be, produces chemical changes and variations of temperature in the human physical body; whatever corresponds to such emotion in the spirit of the earth may well cause chemical changes in *his* physical body also, and variations of temperature in its immediate surroundings. Now variations of temperature in the atmosphere mean wind; sudden and violent variations mean storm; and chemical changes beneath the surface of the earth not infrequently cause earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

No student of occultism will fall into the common error of regarding as evil such outbursts as storms or eruptions, because they sometimes destroy human life; for he will recognise that, whatever the immediate cause may be, all that happens is part of the working of the great immutable law of justice, and that He who doeth all things most certainly doeth all things well. This aspect of natural phenomena, however, will be considered in a later chapter.

It cannot be questioned that men are much and variously affected by the weather. There is a general consensus of opinion that gloomy weather is depressing; but

this is mainly due to the fact that in the absence of sunlight there is, as has already been explained, a lack of vitality. Some people, however, take an actual delight in rain or snow or high wind. There is in these disturbances something which produces a distinct pleasurable sensation which quickens their vibrations and harmonises with the keynote of their nature. It is probable that this is not entirely or even chiefly due to the physical disturbance; it is rather that the subtle change in the aura of the spirit of the earth (which produces or coincides with this phenomenon) is one with which their spirits are in sympathy. A still more decided instance of this is the effect of a thunder-storm. There are many people in whom it produces a curious sense of overwhelming fear entirely out of proportion to any physical danger that it can be supposed to bring. In others, on the contrary, the electrical storm produces wild exultation. The influence of electricity on the physical nerves no doubt plays a part in producing these unusual sensations, but their true cause lies deeper than that.

The effect produced upon people by these various manifestations depends upon the

preponderance in their temperament of certain types of elemental essence which, because of this sympathetic vibration, used to be called by mediæval enquirers earthy, watery, airy or fiery. Exactly in the same way the effect of the various sections of our surroundings will be greater or less upon men according as they have more or less of one or other of these constituents in their composition. To the man who responds most readily to earth influences, the nature of the soil upon which his house is built is of primary importance, but it matters comparatively little to him whether it is or is not in the neighbourhood of water; whereas the man who responds most readily to the radiations of water would care little about the soil so long as he had the ocean or a lake within sight and within easy reach.

ROCKS

Influence is perpetually radiated upon us by all objects of nature, even by the very earth upon which we tread. Each type of rock or soil has its own special variety, and the differences between them

are great, so that their effect is by no means to be neglected. In the production of this effect three factors bear their part—the life of the rock itself, the kind of elemental essence appropriate to its astral counterpart, and the kind of nature-spirits which it attracts. The life of the rock is simply the life of the Second Great Outpouring which has arrived at the stage of ensouling the mineral kingdom, and the elemental essence is a later wave of that same divine Life which is one chain-period behind the other, and has as yet in its descent into matter reached only the astral world. The nature-spirits belong to a different evolution altogether, to which we shall refer in due course.

The point for us to bear in mind for the moment is that each kind of soil—granite or sandstone, chalk, clay or lava, has its definite influence upon those who live on it—an influence which never ceases. Night and day, summer and winter, year in and year out, this steady pressure is being exercised, and it has its part in the moulding of races and districts, types as well as individuals. All these matters are as yet but little comprehended by ordinary

science, but there can be no doubt that in time to come these effects will be thoroughly studied, and the doctors of the future will take them into account, and prescribe a change of soil as well as of air for their patients.

An entirely new and distinct set of agencies is brought into play wherever water exists, whether it be in the form of lake, river or sea—powerful in different ways in all of them truly, but most powerful and observable in the last. Here also the same three factors have to be considered—the life of the water itself, the elemental essence pervading it, and the type of nature-spirits associated with it.

TREES

Strong influences are radiated by the vegetable kingdom also, and the different kinds of plants and trees vary greatly in their effect. Those who have not specially studied the subject invariably underrate the strength, capacity and intelligence shown in vegetable life. I have already written upon this in *The Christian Creed*, p. 51 (2nd edition) so I will not repeat myself

here, but will rather draw attention to the fact that trees—especially old trees—have a strong and definite individuality, well worthy the name of a soul. This soul, though temporary, in the sense that it is not yet a reincarnating entity, is nevertheless possessed of considerable power and intelligence along its own lines.

It has decided likes and dislikes, and to clairvoyant sight it shows quite clearly by a vivid rosy flush an emphatic enjoyment of the sunlight and the rain, and distinct pleasure also in the presence of those whom it has learnt to like, or with whom it has sympathetic vibrations. Emerson appears to have realised this, for he is quoted in Hutton's *Reminiscences* as saying of his trees : "I am sure they miss me; they seem to droop when I go away, and I know they brighten and bloom when I go back to them and shake hands with their lower branches."

An old forest tree is a high development of vegetable life, and when it is transferred from that kingdom it does not pass into the lowest form of animal life. In some cases its individuality is even sufficiently distinct to allow it to manifest itself tem-

porarily outside its physical form, and when that is so it often takes the human shape. Matters may be otherwise arranged in other solar systems for aught we know, but in ours the Deity has chosen the human form to enshrine the highest intelligence, to be carried on to the utmost perfection as His scheme developes; and because that is so, there is always a tendency among lower kinds of life to reach upwards towards that form, and in their primitive way to imagine themselves as possessing it.

Thus it happens that such creatures as gnomes or elves, whose bodies are of fluidic nature, of astral or etheric matter which is plastic under the influence of the will, habitually adopt some approximation to the appearance of humanity. Thus also when it is possible for the soul of a tree to externalise itself and become visible, it is almost always in human shape that it is seen. Doubtless these were the dryads of classical times; and the occasional appearance of such figures may account for the widely-spread custom of tree-worship. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*; and if primitive man saw a huge grave human form

come forth from a tree, he was likely enough in his ignorance to set up an altar there and worship it, not in the least understanding that he himself stood far higher in evolution than it did, and that its very assumption of his image was an acknowledgment of that fact.

The occult side of the instinct of a plant is also exceedingly interesting; its one great object, like that of some human beings, is always to found a family and reproduce its species; and it has certainly a feeling of active enjoyment in its success, in the colour and beauty of its flowers and in their efficiency in attracting bees and other insects. Unquestionably plants feel admiration lavished upon them and delight in it; they are sensitive to human affection and they return it in their own way.

When all this is borne in mind, it will readily be understood that trees exercise much more influence over human beings than is commonly supposed, and that he who sets himself to cultivate sympathetic and friendly relations with *all* his neighbours, vegetable as well as animal and human, may both receive and give a great deal of which the average man knows

nothing, and may thus make his life fuller, wider, more complete.

THE SEVEN TYPES

The classification of the vegetable kingdom adopted by the occultist follows the line of the seven great types mentioned in our previous chapter on planetary influences, and each of these is divided into seven sub-types. If we imagine ourselves trying to tabulate the vegetable kingdom, these divisions would naturally be perpendicular, not horizontal. We should not have trees as one type, shrubs as another, ferns as a third, grasses or mosses as a fourth; rather we should find trees, shrubs, ferns, grasses, mosses of each of the seven types, so that along each line all the steps of the ascending scale are represented.

One might phrase it that when the Second Outpouring is ready to descend, seven great channels, each with its seven subdivisions, lie open for its choice; but the channel through which it passes gives it a certain colouring—a set of temperamental characteristics—which it never wholly loses, so that although in order to express itself it needs matter

belonging to all the different types, it has always a preponderance of its own type, and always recognisably belongs to that type and no other, until after its evolution is over it returns as a glorified spiritual power to the Deity from Whom it originally emerged as a mere undeveloped potentiality.

The vegetable kingdom is only one stage in this stupendous course, yet these different types are distinguishable in it just as they are among animals or human beings, and each has its own special influence, which may be soothing or helpful to one man, distressing or irritating to another, and inert in the case of a third, according to *his* type and to his condition at the time. Training and practice are necessary to enable the student to assign the various plants and trees to their proper classes, but the distinction between the magnetism radiated by the oak and the pine, the palm tree and the banyan, the olive and the eucalyptus, the rose and the lily, the violet and the sunflower, cannot fail to be obvious to any sensitive person. Wide as the poles asunder is the dissimilarity between the 'feeling' of an English forest and a tropical jungle, or the bush of Australia or New Zealand.

ANIMALS

For thousands of years man has lived so cruelly that all wild creatures fear and avoid him, so the influence upon him of the animal kingdom is practically confined to that of the domestic animals. In our relations with these our influence over them is naturally far more potent than theirs over us, yet this latter is by no means to be ignored. A man who has really made friends with an animal is often much helped and strengthened by the affection lavished ~~upon~~ him. Being more advanced, a man is ~~naturally~~ capable of greater love than an animal is; but the animal's affection is usually more concentrated, and he is far more likely to throw the whole of his energy into it than a man is.

The very fact of the man's higher development gives him a multiplicity of interests, among which his attention is divided; the animal often pours the entire strength of his nature into one channel, and so produces a most powerful effect. The man has a hundred other matters to think about, and the current of his love consequently cannot but be variable; when the dog or the cat develops a

really great affection it fills the whole of his life, and he therefore keeps a steady stream of force always playing upon its object—a factor whose value is by no means to be ignored.

Similarly the man who is so wicked as to provoke by cruelty the hatred and fear of domestic animals becomes by a righteous retribution the centre of converging forces of antipathy; for such conduct arouses deep indignation among nature-spirits and other astral and etheric entities, as well as among all right-minded men, whether living or dead.

HUMAN BEINGS

Since it is emphatically true that no man can afford to be disliked or feared by his cat or dog, it is clear that the same consideration applies with still greater force to the human beings who surround him. It is not easy to overestimate the importance to a man of winning the kindly regard of those with whom he is in constant association—to overrate the value to a schoolmaster of the attitude towards him of his pupils, to a merchant of the feeling of his clerks, to an officer of the devotion

of his men; and this entirely apart from the obvious effects produced in the physical world. If a man holding any such position as one of these is able to arouse the enthusiastic affection of his subordinates, he becomes the focus upon which many streams of such forces are constantly converging. Not only does this greatly uplift and strengthen him, but it also enables him, if he understands something of the working of occult laws, to be of far greater use to those who feel the affection, and to do much more with them than would otherwise be possible.

To obtain this result it is not in the least necessary that they should agree with him in opinion; with the particular effect with which we are at present concerned their mental attitude has no connection whatever; it is a matter of strong kindly feeling. If the feeling should unfortunately be of an opposite kind—if the man is feared or despised—currents of antipathy are perpetually flowing towards him, which cause weakness and discord in the vibrations of his higher vehicles, and also cut him off from the possibility of doing satisfactory and fruitful work with those under his charge.

It is not only the force of the feeling sent out by the person; like attracts like in the astral world as well as the physical. There are always masses of vague thought floating about in the atmosphere, some of them good and some evil, but all alike ready to reinforce any decided thought of their own type. Also there are nature-spirits of low order, which enjoy the coarse vibrations of anger and hatred, and are therefore very willing to throw themselves into any current of such nature. By doing so they intensify the undulations, and add fresh life to them. All this tends to strengthen the effect produced by the converging streams of unfavourable thought and feeling.

It has been said that a man is known by the company he keeps. It is also to a large extent true that he is *made* by it, for those with whom he constantly associates are all the while unconsciously influencing him and bringing him by degrees more and more into harmony with such undulations as they radiate. He who is much in the presence of a large-minded and unworldly man has a fine opportunity of himself becoming large-minded and unworldly, for a steady though imperceptible

pressure in that direction is perpetually being exerted upon him, so that it is easier for him to grow in that way than in any other. For the same reason a man who spends his time loafing in a public-house with the idle and vicious is exceedingly likely to end by becoming idle and vicious himself. The study of the hidden side of things emphatically endorses the old proverb that evil communications corrupt good manners.

This fact of the enormous influence of close association with a more advanced personality is well understood in the East, where it is recognised that the most important and effective part of the training of a disciple is that he shall live constantly in the presence of his teacher and bathe in his aura. The various vehicles of the teacher are all vibrating with a steady and powerful swing at rates both higher and more regular than any which the pupil can yet maintain, though he may sometimes reach them for a few moments; but the constant pressure of the stronger thought-waves of the teacher gradually raises those of the pupil into the same key. A person who has as yet but little musical ear

finds it difficult to sing correct intervals alone, but if he joins with another stronger voice which is already perfectly trained his task becomes easier—which may serve as a kind of rough analogy.

The great point is that the dominant note of the teacher is always sounding, so that its action is affecting the pupil night and day without need of any special thought on the part of either of them. Growth and change must of course be ceaselessly taking place in the vehicles of the pupil, as in those of all other men; but the powerful undulations emanating from the teacher render it easy for this growth to take place in the right direction, and exceedingly difficult for it to go any other way, somewhat as the splints which surround a broken limb ensure that its growth shall be only in the right line, so as to avoid distortion.

No ordinary man, acting automatically and without intention, will be able to exercise even a hundredth part of the carefully-directed influence of a spiritual teacher; but numbers may to some extent compensate for lack of individual power, so that the ceaseless though unnoticed pressure exercised upon us by the opinions and feelings of

our associates leads us frequently to absorb without knowing it many of their prejudices. It is distinctly undesirable that a man should remain always among one set of people and hear only one set of views. It is eminently necessary that he should know something of other sets, for only in that way can he learn to see good in all; only by thoroughly understanding both sides of any case can he form an opinion that has any right to be called a real judgment. The prejudiced person is always and necessarily an ignorant person; and the only way in which his ignorance can be dispelled is by getting outside his own narrow little circle, and learning to look at things for himself and see what they really are—not what those who know nothing about them suppose them to be.

TRAVEL

The extent to which our human surroundings influence us is only realised when we change them for awhile, and the most effective method of doing this is to travel in a foreign country. But true travel is not to rush from one gigantic caravanserai to another,

consorting all the time with one's own countrymen, and grumbling at every custom which differs from those of our particular Little Pedlington. It is rather to live for a time quietly in some foreign land, trying to get really to know its people and to understand them; to study a custom and see why it has arisen, and what good there is in it, instead of condemning it off-hand because it is not our own. The man who does this will soon come to recognise the characteristic traits of the various races—to comprehend such fundamental diversities as those between the English and the Irish, the Hindu and the American, the Breton, and the Sicilian, and yet to realise that they are to be looked upon *not* as one better than another, but as the different colours that go to make up the rainbow, the different movements that are all necessary as parts of the great oratorio of life.

Each has its part to play in affording opportunity for the evolution of egos who need just its influence, who are lacking in just its characteristics. Each race has behind it a mighty angel, the Spirit of the Race, who under the direction of the Manu

preserves its special qualities and guides it along the line destined for it. A new race is born when in the scheme of evolution a new type of temperament is needed ; a race dies out when all the egos who can be benefited by it have passed through it. The influence of the Spirit of a Race thoroughly permeates the country or district over which his supervision extends, and is naturally a factor of the greatest importance to any visitor who is in the least sensitive.

The ordinary tourist is too often imprisoned in the triple armour of aggressive race-prejudice ; he is so full of conceit over the supposed excellencies of his own nation that he is incapable of seeing good in any other. The wiser traveller who is willing to open his heart to the action of higher forces may receive from this source much that is valuable, both of instruction and experience. But in order to do that he must begin by putting himself in the right attitude ; he must be ready to listen rather than to talk, to learn rather than to boast, to appreciate rather than to criticise, to try to understand rather than rashly to condemn.

To achieve such a result is the true object of travel, and we have a far better opportunity for this than was afforded to our forefathers. Methods of communication are so much improved that it is now possible for almost anyone to achieve quickly and cheaply journeys that would have been entirely impossible a century ago except for the rich and leisured class. Along with these possibilities of intercommunication has come the wide dissemination of foreign news by means of the telegraph and the newspaper press, so that even those who do not actually leave their own country still know much more about others than was ever possible before. Without all these facilities there never could have been a Theosophical Society, or at least it could not have had its present character, nor could it have reached its present level of effectiveness.

The first object of the Theosophical Society is the promotion of universal brotherhood, and nothing helps so much to induce brotherly feeling between nations as full and constant intercourse with one another. When people know one another only by hearsay all sorts of absurd prejudices grow

up, but when they come to know one another intimately, each finds that the other is after all a human being much like himself, with the same interests and objects, the same joys and sorrows.

In the old days each nation lived to a large extent in a condition of selfish isolation, and if trouble of some sort fell upon one, it had usually no resources but its own upon which it could depend. Now the whole world is so closely drawn together that if there is a famine in India help is sent from America; if an earthquake devastates one of the countries of Europe, subscriptions for the sufferers pour in at once from all the others. However far away as yet may be the perfect realisation of universal brotherhood, it is clear that we are at least drawing nearer to it; we have not yet learnt entirely to trust one another, but at least we are ready to help one another, and that is already a long step upon the road towards becoming really one family.

We know how often travel is recommended as a cure for many physical ills, especially for those which manifest themselves through the various forms of nervous derangement. Most of us find it to be

fatiguing, yet also undeniably exhilarating, though we do not always realise that this is not only because of the change of air and of the ordinary physical impressions, but also because of the change of the etheric and astral influences which are connected with each place and district.

Ocean, mountain, forest or waterfall—each has its own special type of life, astral and etheric as well as visible; and, therefore, its own special set of impressions and influences. Many of these unseen entities are pouring out vitality, and in any case, the vibrations which they radiate awaken unaccustomed portions of our etheric double, and of our astral and mental bodies, and the effect is like the exercise of muscles which are not ordinarily called into activity—somewhat tiring at the time, yet distinctly healthy and desirable in the long run.

The town-dweller is accustomed to his surroundings, and usually does not realise the horror of them until he leaves them for a time. To dwell beside a busy main street is from the astral point of view like living on the brink of an open sewer—a river of fetid mud which is always throwing up splashes and noisome odours as it

rolls along. No man, however unimpressionable, can endure this indefinitely without deterioration, and an occasional change into the country is a necessity on the ground of moral as well as physical health. In travelling from the town into the country, too, we leave behind us to a great extent the stormy sea of warring human passion and labour, and such human thoughts as still remain to act upon us are usually of the less selfish and more elevated kind.

In the presence of one of nature's great wonders, such as the Falls of Niagara, almost everyone is for the time drawn out of himself; and out of the petty round of daily care and selfish desire, so that his thought is nobler and broader, and the thought-forms which he leaves behind him are correspondingly less disturbing and more helpful. These considerations once more make it evident that in order to obtain the full benefit of travel a man must pay attention to nature and allow it to act upon him. If he is wrapped up all the while in selfish and gloomy thoughts, crushed by financial trouble, or brooding over his own sickness and weakness, little benefit can be derived from the healing influences.

Another point is that certain places are permeated by certain special types of thought. The consideration of this matter belongs rather to another chapter, but we may introduce it so far as to mention that the frame of mind in which people habitually visit a certain place reacts strongly upon all the other visitors to it. Popular sea-side resorts in England have about them an air of buoyancy and irresponsibility, a determined feeling of holiday life, of temporary freedom from business and of the resolution to make the most of it, from the influence of which it is difficult to escape. Thus the jaded and overworked man who spends his well-earned holiday in such a place obtains quite a different result from that which would follow if he simply stayed quietly at home. To sit at home would probably be less fatiguing, but also much less stimulating.

To take a country walk is to travel in miniature, and in order to appreciate its healthful effect we must bear in mind what has been said of all the different vibrations issuing from various kinds of trees or plants, and even from different kinds of soil or rock. All these act as a kind of

massage upon the etheric, astral and mental bodies, and tend to relieve the strain which the worries of our common life persistently exert upon certain parts of these vehicles.

Glimpses of the truth on these points may sometimes be caught from the traditions of the peasantry. For example, there is a widely-spread belief that strength may be gained from sleeping under a pine-tree with the head to the north. For some cases this is suitable, and the rationale of it is that there are magnetic currents always flowing over the surface of the earth which are quite unknown to ordinary men. These by steady, gentle pressure gradually comb out the entanglements and strengthen the particles both of the astral body and of the etheric part of the physical, and thus bring them more into harmony and introduce rest and calm. The part played by the pine-tree is, first, that its radiations make the man sensitive to those magnetic currents, and bring him into a state in which it is possible for them to act upon him, and secondly, that (as has already been explained) it is constantly throwing off vitality in that special condition in which it is easiest for man to absorb it.

CHAPTER VI

BY NATURE-SPIRITS

AN EVOLUTION APART

ANOTHER factor which exercises great influence under certain restrictions is the nature-spirit. We may regard the nature-spirits of the land as in a sense the original inhabitants of the country, driven away from some parts of it by the invasion of man, much as the wild animals have been. Just like wild animals, the nature-spirits avoid altogether the great cities and all places where men most do congregate, so that in those their effect is a negligible quantity. But in all quiet country places, among the woods and fields, upon the mountains or out at sea, nature-spirits are constantly present, and though they rarely show themselves, their influence is powerful and all-pervading, just as the scent of the violets fills the air though they are hidden modestly among the leaves.

The nature-spirits constitute an evolution apart, quite distinct at this stage from that of humanity. We are all familiar with the course taken by the Second Outpouring through the three elemental kingdoms down to the mineral and upward through the vegetable and animal to the attainment of individuality at the human level. We know that, after that individuality has been attained, the unfolding of humanity carries us gradually to the steps of the Path, and then onward and upward to Adeptship and to the glorious possibilities which lie beyond.

This is our line of development, but we must not make the mistake of thinking of it as the only line. Even in this world of ours the divine life is pressing upwards through several streams, of which ours is but one, and numerically by no means the most important. It may help us to realise this if we remember that while humanity in its physical manifestation occupies only quite a small part of the surface of the earth, entities at a corresponding level on other lines of evolution not only crowd the earth far more thickly than man, but at the same time populate the enormous plains of the sea and the fields of the air.

LINES OF EVOLUTION

At this present stage we find these streams running parallel to one another, but for the time quite distinct. The nature-spirits, for example, neither have been nor ever will be members of a humanity such as ours, yet the indwelling life of the nature-spirit comes from the same Solar Deity as our own, and will return to Him just as ours will. The streams may be roughly considered as flowing side by side as far as the mineral level, but as soon as they turn to commence the upward arc of evolution divergence begins to appear. This stage of immetalization is naturally that at which life is most deeply immersed in physical matter; but while some of the streams retain physical forms through several of the further stages of their development, making them, as they proceed, more and more an expression of the life within, there are other streams which at once begin to cast off the grosser, and for the rest of their unfolding in this world use only bodies composed of etheric matter.

One of these streams, for example, after finishing that stage of its evolvement in which

it is part of the mineral monad, instead of passing into the vegetable kingdom takes for itself vehicles of etheric matter which inhabit the interior of the earth, living actually within the solid rock. It is difficult for many students to understand how it is possible for any kind of creature thus to inhabit the solid substance of the rock or the crust of the earth. Creatures possessing bodies of etheric matter find the substance of the rock no impediment to their motion or their vision. Indeed, for them physical matter in its solid state is their natural element and habitat—the only one to which they are accustomed and in which they feel at home. These vague lower lives in amorphous etheric vehicles are not readily comprehensible to us; but somehow they gradually evolve to a stage when, though still inhabiting the solid rock, they live close to the surface of the earth instead of in its depths, and the more developed of them are able occasionally to detach themselves from it for a short time.

These creatures have sometimes been seen, and perhaps more frequently heard, in caves or mines, and they are often described in

mediæval literature as gnomes. The etheric matter of their bodies is not, under ordinary conditions, visible to physical eyes, so that when they are seen one of two things must take place; either they must materialise themselves by drawing round them a veil of physical matter, or else the spectator must experience an increase of sensitiveness which enables him to respond to the wave-lengths of the higher ethers, and to see what is not normally perceptible to him.

The slight temporary exaltation of faculty necessary for this is not very uncommon nor difficult to achieve, and on the other hand materialisation is easy for creatures which are only just beyond the bounds of visibility; so that they would be seen far more frequently than they are, but for the rooted objection to the proximity of human beings which they share with all but the lowest types of nature-spirits. The next stage of their advancement brings them into the subdivision commonly called fairies—the type of nature-spirits which usually live upon the surface of the earth as we do, though still using only an etheric body; and after that they pass on through the

air-spirits into the kingdom of the angels in a way which will be explained later.

The life-wave which is at the mineral level is manifesting itself not only through the rocks which form the solid crust of the earth, but also through the waters of the ocean; and just as the former may pass through low etheric forms of life (at present unknown to man) in the interior of the earth, so the latter may pass through corresponding low etheric forms which have their dwelling in the depths of the sea. In this case also the next stage or kingdom brings us into more definite though still etheric forms inhabiting the middle depths, and very rarely showing themselves at the surface. The third stage for them (corresponding to that of the fairies for the rock-spirits) is to join the enormous host of water-spirits which cover the vast plains of the ocean with their joyous life.

Taking as they do bodies of etheric matter only, it will be seen that the entities following these lines of development miss altogether the vegetable and animal kingdoms as well as the human. There are, however, other types of nature-spirits which enter into both these kingdoms before they

begin to diverge. In the ocean, for example, there is a stream of life which, after leaving the mineral level, touches the vegetable kingdom in the form of sea-weeds, and then passes on, through the corals and the sponges and the huge cephalopods of the middle deeps, up into the great family of the fishes, and only after that joins the ranks of water-spirits.

It will be seen that these retain the dense physical body as a vehicle up to a much higher level; and in the same way we notice that the fairies of the land are recruited not only from the ranks of the gnomes, but also from the less evolved strata of the animal kingdom, for we find a line of development which just touches the vegetable kingdom in the shape of minute fungoid growths, and then passes onward through bacteria and animalculæ of various kinds, through the insects and reptiles up to the beautiful family of the birds, and only after many incarnations among these joins the still more joyous tribe of the fairies.

Yet another stream diverges into etheric life at an intermediate point, for while it comes up through the vegetable kingdom in the shape of grasses and cereals, it turns

aside thence into the animal kingdom and is conducted through the curious communities of the ants and bees, and then through a set of etheric creatures closely corresponding to the latter—those tiny humming-bird-like nature-spirits which are so continually seen hovering about flowers and plants, and play so large a part in the production of their manifold variations—their playfulness being often utilised in specialization and in the helping of growth.

It is necessary, however, to draw a careful distinction here, to avoid confusion. The little creatures that look after flowers may be divided into two great classes, though of course there are many varieties of each kind. The first class may properly be called elementals, for beautiful though they are, they are in reality only thought-forms, and therefore they are not really *living* creatures at all. Perhaps I should rather say that they are only temporarily living creatures, for though they are very active and busy during their little lives, they have no real evolving reincarnating life in them, and when they have done their work, they just go to pieces and dissolve into the surrounding atmosphere, precisely as our

own thought-forms do. They are the thought-forms of the Great Beings or angels who are in charge of the evolution of the vegetable kingdom.

When one of these Great Ones has a new idea connected with one of the kinds of plants or flowers which are under his charge, he often creates a thought-form for the special purpose of carrying out that idea. It usually takes the form either of an etheric model of the flower itself or of a little creature which hangs round the plant or the flower all through the time that the buds are forming, and gradually builds them into the shape and colour of which the angel has thought. But as soon as the plant has fully grown, or the flower has opened, its work is over and its power is exhausted, and, as I have said, it just simply dissolves, because the will to do that piece of work was the only soul that it had.

But there is quite another kind of little creature which is very frequently seen playing about with flowers, and this time it is a real nature-spirit. There are many varieties of these also. One of the commonest forms is, as I have said, something very much

like a tiny humming-bird, and it may often be seen buzzing round the flowers much in the same way as a humming-bird or a bee does. These beautiful little creatures will never become human, because they are not in the same line of evolution as we are. The life which is now animating them has come up through grasses and cereals, such as wheat and oats, when it was in the vegetable kingdom, and afterwards through ants and bees when it was in the animal kingdom. Now it has reached the level of these tiny nature-spirits, and its next stage will be to ensoul some of the beautiful fairies with etheric bodies who live upon the surface of the earth. Later on they will become salamanders or fire-spirits, and later still they will become sylphs, or air-spirits, having only astral bodies instead of etheric. Later still they will pass through the different stages of the great kingdom of the angels.

OVERLAPPING

In all cases of the transference of the life-wave from one kingdom to another great latitude is allowed for variation; there

is a good deal of overlapping between the kingdoms. That is perhaps most clearly to be seen along our own line of evolution, for we find that the life which has attained to the highest levels in the vegetable kingdom never passes into the lower part of the animal kingdom at all, but on the contrary joins it at a fairly advanced stage. Let me recall the example which I have already given; the life which has ensouled one of our great forest trees could never descend to animate a swarm of mosquitoes, nor even a family of rats or mice or such small deer; while these latter would be quite appropriate forms for that part of the life-wave which had left the vegetable kingdom at the level of the daisy or the dandelion.

The ladder of evolution has to be climbed in all cases, but it seems as though the higher part of one kingdom lies to a large extent parallel with the lower part of that above it, so that it is possible for a transfer from one to the other to take place at different levels in different cases. That stream of life which enters the human kingdom avoids altogether the lowest stages of the animal kingdom; that is, the life

which is presently to rise into humanity never manifests itself through the insects or the reptiles; in the past it did sometimes enter the animal kingdom at the level of the great antediluvian reptiles, but now it passes directly from the highest forms of the vegetable life into the mammalia. Similarly, when the most advanced domestic animal becomes individualised, he does not need to descend into the form of the absolutely primitive savage for his first human incarnation.

The accompanying diagram shows some of these lines of development in a convenient tabular form, but it must not be considered as in any way exhaustive, as there are no doubt other lines which have not yet been observed, and there are certainly all kinds of variations and possibilities of crossing at different levels from one line to another; so that all we can do is to give a broad outline of the scheme.

As will be seen from the diagram, at a later stage all the lines of evolution converge once more; at least to our dim sight there seems no distinction of glory among those Lofty Ones, though probably if we knew more we could make our table

more complete. At any rate we know that, much as humanity lies above the animal kingdom, so beyond and above humanity in its turn lies the great kingdom of the angels, and that to enter among the angels is one of the seven possibilities which the Adept finds opening before him. That same kingdom is also the next stage for the nature-spirit, but we have here another instance of the overlapping previously mentioned, for the Adept joins that kingdom at a high level, omitting altogether three of its stages, while the next step of progress for the highest type of nature-spirit is to become the lowest class of angel, thus beginning at the bottom of that particular ladder instead of stepping on to it half-way up.

It is on joining the angel kingdom that the nature-spirit receives the divine Spark of the Third Outpouring, and thus attains individuality, just as the animal does when he passes into the human kingdom; and a further point of similarity is that just as the animal gains individualisation only through contact with humanity, so the nature-spirit gains it through contact with the angel—through becoming attached to him and working in order to please him, until at

last he learns how to do angel's work himself.

The more advanced nature-spirit is therefore not exactly an etheric or astral human being, for he is not yet an individual; yet he is much more than an etheric or astral animal, for his intellectual level is far higher than anything which we find in the animal kingdom, and is indeed quite equal along many lines to that of average humanity. On the other hand, some of the earlier varieties possess but a limited amount of intelligence, and seem to be about on an equality with the humming-birds or bees or butterflies which they so closely resemble. As we have seen from our diagram, this one name of nature-spirit covers a large segment of the arc of evolution, including stages corresponding to the whole of the vegetable and animal kingdom, and to humanity up to almost the present level of our own race.

Some of the lower types are not pleasing to the æsthetic sense; but that is true also of the lower kinds of reptiles and insects. There are undeveloped tribes whose tastes are coarse, and naturally their appearance corresponds to the stage of their evolution.

The shapeless masses with huge red gaping mouths, which live upon the loathsome etheric emanations of blood and decaying flesh, are horrible both to the sight and to the feeling of any pure-minded person; so also are the rapacious red-brown crustacean creatures which hover over houses of ill-fame, and the savage octopus-like monsters which gloat over the orgies of the drunkard and revel in the fumes of alcohol. But even these harpies are not evil in themselves, though repulsive to man; and man would never come into contact with them unless he degraded himself to their level by becoming the slave of his lower passions.

It is only nature-spirits of these and similar primitive and unpleasant kinds which voluntarily approach the average man. Others of the same sort, but a shade less material, enjoy the sensation of bathing in any specially coarse astral radiations, such as those produced by anger, avarice, cruelty, envy, jealousy or hatred. People yielding themselves to such feelings can depend upon being constantly surrounded by these carrion crows of the astral world, who quiver in their ghastly glee as they jostle

one another in eager anticipation of an outburst of passion, and in their blind blundering way do whatever they can to provoke or intensify it. It is difficult to believe that such horrors as these can belong to the same kingdom as the jocund spirits next to be described.

FAIRIES

The type best known to man is that of the fairies, the spirits who live normally upon the surface of the earth, though, since their bodies are of etheric matter, they can pass into the ground at will. Their forms are many and various, but most frequently human in shape and somewhat diminutive in size, usually with a grotesque exaggeration of some particular feature or limb. Etheric matter being plastic and readily moulded by the power of thought, they are able to assume almost any appearance at will, but they nevertheless have definite forms of their own, which they wear when they have no special object to serve by taking any other, and are therefore not exerting their will to produce a change of shape. They have also colours of their own, marking

the difference between their tribes or species, just as the birds have differences of plumage.

There are an immense number of subdivisions or races among them, and individuals of these subdivisions vary in intelligence and disposition precisely as human beings do. Again like human beings, these divers races inhabit different countries, or sometimes different districts of the same country, and the members of one race have a general tendency to keep together, just as men of one nation do among ourselves. They are on the whole distributed much as are the other kingdoms of nature; like the birds, from whom some of them have been evolved, some varieties are peculiar to one country, others are common in one country and rare elsewhere, while others again are to be found almost anywhere. Again like the birds, it is broadly true that the most brilliantly coloured orders are to be found in tropical countries.

NATIONAL TYPES

The predominant types of the different parts of the world are usually clearly distinguishable and in a sense characteristic;

or is it perhaps that their influence in the slow course of ages has moulded the men and animals and plants who lived near them, so that it is the nature-spirit who has set the fashion and the other kingdoms which have unconsciously followed it? For example, no contrast could well be more marked than that between the vivacious, rollicking orange-and-purple or scarlet-and-gold mannikins who dance among the vineyards of Sicily and the almost wistful grey-and-green creatures who move so much more sedately amidst the oaks and the furze-covered heaths in Brittany, or the golden-brown 'good people' who haunt the hillsides of Scotland.

In England the emerald-green variety is probably the commonest, and I have seen it also in the woods of France and Belgium, in far-away Massachusetts and on the banks of the Niagara River. The vast plains of the Dakotas are inhabited by a black-and-white kind which I have not seen elsewhere, and California rejoices in a lovely white-and-gold species which also appears to be unique.

In Australia the most frequent type is a very distinctive creature of a wonderful

luminous sky-blue colour; but there is a wide diversity between the etheric inhabitants of New South Wales or Victoria and those of tropical Northern Queensland. These latter approximate closely to those of the Dutch Indies. Java seems specially prolific in these graceful creatures, and the kinds most common there are two distinct types, both monochromatic—one indigo blue with faint metallic gleamings, and the other a study in all known shades of yellow—quaint, but wonderfully effective and attractive.

A striking local variety is gaudily ringed with alternate bars of green and yellow, like a football jersey. This ringed type is possibly a race peculiar to that part of the world, for I saw red and yellow similarly arranged in the Malay Peninsula, and green and white on the other side of the Straits in Sumatra. That huge island also rejoices in the possession of a lovely pale heliotrope tribe which I have seen before only in the hills of Ceylon. Down in New Zealand their specialty is a deep blue shot with silver, while in the South Sea Islands one meets with a silvery-white variety which coruscates with all the colours of the rainbow, like a figure of mother-of-pearl.

In India we find all sorts, from the delicate rose-and-pale-green, or pale-blue-and-primrose of the hill country to the rich medley of gorgeously gleaming colours, almost barbaric in their intensity and profusion, which is characteristic of the plains. In some parts of that marvellous country I have seen the black-and-gold type which is more usually associated with the African desert, and also a species which resembles a statuette made out of a gleaming crimson metal, such as was the orichalcum of the Atlanteans.

Somewhat akin to this last is a curious variety which looks as though cast out of bronze and burnished; it appears to make its home in the immediate neighbourhood of volcanic disturbances, since the only places in which it has been seen so far are the slopes of Vesuvius and Etna, the interior of Java, the Sandwich Islands, the Yellowstone Park in North America, and a certain part of the North Island of New Zealand. Several indications seem to point to the conclusion that this is a survival of a primitive type, and represents a sort of intermediate stage between the gnome and the fairy.

In some cases, districts close together are found to be inhabited by quite different classes of nature-spirits; for example, as has already been mentioned, the emerald-green elves are common in Belgium, yet a hundred miles away in Holland hardly one of them is to be seen, and their place is taken by a sober-looking dark-purple species.

ON A SACRED MOUNTAIN IN IRELAND

A curious fact is that altitude above the sea-level seems to affect their distribution, those who belong to the mountains scarcely ever intermingling with those of the plains. I well remember, when climbing Slieve-na-mon, one of the traditionally sacred hills of Ireland, noticing the very definite lines of demarcation between the different types. The lower slopes, like the surrounding plains, were alive with the intensely active and mischievous little red-and-black race which swarms all over the south and west of Ireland, being especially attracted to the magnetic centres established nearly two thousand years ago by the magic-working priests of the old Milesian race to ensure and perpetuate

their domination over the people by keeping them under the influence of the great illusion. After half-an-hour's climbing, however, not one of these red-and-black gentry was to be seen, but instead the hillside was populous with the gentler blue-and-brown type which long ago owed special allegiance to the Tuatha-de-Danaan.

These also had their zone and their well-defined limits, and no nature-spirit of either type ever ventured to trespass upon the space round the summit, sacred to the great green angels who have watched there for more than two thousand years, guarding one of the centres of living force that link the past to the future of that mystic land of Erin. Taller far than the height of man, these giant forms, in colour like the first new leaves of spring, soft, luminous, shimmering, indescribable, look forth over the world with wondrous eyes that shine like stars, full of the peace of those who live in the eternal, waiting with the calm certainty of knowledge until the appointed time shall come. One realises very fully the power and importance of the hidden side of things when one beholds such a spectacle as that.

But indeed it is scarcely hidden, for the different influences are so strong and so distinct that anyone in the least sensitive cannot but be aware of them, and there is good reason for the local tradition that he who spends a night upon the summit of the mountain shall awaken in the morning either a poet or a madman. A poet if he has proved capable of response to the exaltation of the whole being produced by the tremendous magnetism which has played upon him while he slept; a madman, if he was not strong enough to bear the strain.

FAIRY LIFE AND DEATH

The life-periods of the different subdivisions of nature-spirits vary greatly, some being quite short, others much longer than our human life-time. The universal principle of reincarnation obtains in their existence also, though the conditions naturally make its working slightly different. They have no phenomena corresponding to what we mean by birth and growth; a fairy appears in his world full-sized, as an insect does. He lives his life, short or long, without any appearance

of fatigue or need of rest, and without any perceptible signs of age as the years pass.

But at last there comes a time when his energy seems to have exhausted itself, when he becomes somewhat tired of life; and when that happens his body grows more and more diaphanous until he is left as an astral entity, to live for a time in that world among the air-spirits who represent the next stage of development for him. Through that astral life he fades back into his group-soul, in which he may have (if sufficiently advanced) a certain amount of conscious existence before the cyclic law acts upon the group-soul once more by arousing in it the desire for separation. When this happens, its pressure turns the stream of its energy outward once more, and that desire, acting upon the plastic astral and etheric matter, materialises a body of similar type, such as is suitable to be an expression of the development attained in that last life.

Birth and death, therefore, are much simpler for the nature-spirit than for us, and death is for him quite free from all thought of sorrow. Indeed, his whole life seems

simpler—a joyous irresponsible kind of existence, much such as a party of happy children might lead among exceptionally favourable physical surroundings. There is no sex among nature-spirits, there is no disease, and there is no struggle for existence, so that they are exempt from the most fertile causes of human suffering. They have keen affections and are capable of forming close and lasting friendships, from which they derive profound and never-failing joy. Jealousy and anger are possible to them, but seem quickly to fade before the overwhelming delight in all the operations of nature which is their most prominent characteristic.

THEIR PLEASURES

They glory in the light and glow of the sunshine, but they dance with equal pleasure in the moonlight; they share and rejoice in the satisfaction of the thirsty earth and the flowers and the trees when they feel the level lances of the rain, but they play just as happily with the falling flakes of snow; they are content to float idly in the calm of a summer afternoon, yet they revel in the rushing of the wind. Not

only do they admire, with an intensity that few of us can understand, the beauty of a flower or a tree, the delicacy of its colour or the grace of its form, but they take ardent interest and deep delight in all the processes of nature, in the flowing of sap, in the opening of buds, in the formation and falling of leaves. Naturally this characteristic is utilised by the Great Ones in charge of evolution, and nature-spirits are employed to assist in the blending of colours and the arrangement of variations. They pay much attention, too, to bird and insect life, to the hatching of the egg and to the opening of the chrysalis, and they watch with jocund eye the play of lambs and fawns, of leverets and squirrels.

Another inestimable advantage that an etheric evolution possesses over one which touches the denser physical is that the necessity of eating is avoided. The body of the fairy absorbs such nourishment as it needs, without trouble and without stint, from the ether which of necessity always surrounds it; or rather, it is not, strictly speaking, that nourishment is absorbed, but rather that a change of particles is constantly taking place, those which have been

drained of their vitality being cast out and others which are full of it being drawn in to replace them.

Though they do not eat, nature-spirits obtain from the fragrance of flowers a pleasure analogous to that which men derive from the taste of food. The aroma is more to them than a mere question of smell or taste, for they bathe themselves in it so that it interpenetrates their bodies and reaches every particle simultaneously.

What takes for them the place of a nervous system is far more delicate than ours, and sensitive to many vibrations which pass all unperceived by our grosser senses, and so they find what corresponds to a scent in many plants and minerals that have no scent for us.

Their bodies have no more internal structure than a wreath of mist, so that they cannot be torn asunder or injured, and neither heat nor cold has any painful effect upon them. Indeed, there is one type whose members seem to enjoy above all things to bathe themselves in fire; they rush from all sides to any great conflagration and fly upward with the flames again and again in wild delight, just as a

boy flies again and again down a toboggan-slide. These are the spirits of the fire, the salamanders of mediæval literature. Bodily pain can come to the nature-spirit only from an unpleasant or inharmonious emanation or vibration, but his power of rapid locomotion enables him easily to avoid these. So far as can be observed he is entirely free from the curse of fear, which plays so serious a part in the animal life which, along our line of evolution, corresponds to the level of the fairies.

THE ROMANCES OF FAIRYLAND

The fairy has an enviably fertile imagination, and it is a great part of his daily play with his fellows to construct for them by its means all kinds of impossible surroundings and romantic situations. He is like a child telling stories to his playmates, but with this advantage over the child that, since the playmates can see both etheric and lower astral matter, the forms built by his vivid thought are plainly visible to them as his tale proceeds.

No doubt many of his narrations would to us seem childish and oddly limited in

scope, because such intelligence as the elf possesses works in directions so different from our own, but to him they are intensely real and a source of never-ending delight. The fairy who develops unusual talent in fiction wins great affection and honour from the rest, and gathers round him a permanent audience or following. When some human being chances to catch a glimpse of such a group, he usually imports into his account of it pre-conceptions derived from his own conditions, and takes the leader for a fairy king or queen, according to the form which that leader may for the moment happen to prefer. In reality the realm of nature-spirits needs no kind of government except the general supervision which is exercised over it, probably unconsciously to all but its higher members, by the Devarajas and their subordinates.

THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS MAN

Most nature-spirits dislike and avoid mankind, and we cannot wonder at it. To them man appears a ravaging demon, destroying and spoiling wherever he goes. He

wantonly kills, often with awful tortures, all the beautiful creatures that they love to watch; he cuts down the trees, he tramples the grass, he plucks the flowers and casts them carelessly aside to die; he replaces all the lovely wild life of nature with his hideous bricks and mortar, and the fragrance of the flowers with the mephitic vapours of his chemicals and the all-polluting smoke of his factories. Can we think it strange that the fairies should regard us with horror, and shrink away from us as we shrink from a poisonous reptile?

Not only do we thus bring devastation to all that they hold most dear, but most of our habits and emanations are distasteful to them; we poison the sweet air for them (some of us) with loathsome fumes of alcohol and tobacco; our restless ill-regulated desires and passions set up a constant rush of astral currents which disturbs and annoys them, and gives them the same feeling of disgust which we should have if a bucket of filthy water were emptied over us. For them to be near the average man is to live in a perpetual hurricane—a hurricane that has blown over

a cesspool. They are not great angels, with the perfect knowledge that brings perfect patience; they are just happy and on the whole well-disposed children—hardly even that, many of them, but more like exceptionally intelligent kittens; again, I say, can we wonder, when we thus habitually outrage their best and highest feelings, that they should dislike us, distrust us and avoid us?

There are instances on record where, by some more than ordinarily unwarranted intrusion or annoyance on the part of man, they have been provoked into direct retaliation and have shown distinct malice. It speaks well for their kingdom as a whole that even under such unendurable provocation such cases are rare, and their more usual method of trying to repel an intruder is by playing tricks upon him, childish and mischievous often, but not seriously harmful. They take an impish delight in misleading or deceiving him, in causing him to lose his way across a moor, in keeping him walking round and round in a circle all night when he believes he is going straight on, or in making him think that he sees palaces and castles where no such

structures really exist. Many a story illustrative of this curious characteristic of the fairies may be found among the village gossip of the peasantry in almost any lonely mountainous district.

GLAMOUR

They are greatly assisted in their tricks by the wonderful power which they possess of casting a glamour over those who yield themselves to their influence, so that such victims for the time see and hear only what these fairies impress upon them, exactly as the mesmerised subject sees, hears, feels and believes whatever the magnetiser wishes. The nature-spirits, however, have not the mesmerist's power of dominating the human will, except in the case of quite unusually weak-minded people, or of those who allow themselves to fall into such a condition of helpless terror that their will is temporarily in abeyance.

The fairies cannot go beyond deception of the senses, but of that they are undoubted masters, and cases are not wanting in which they cast their glamour over a considerable number of people at once. It is by invoking

their aid in the exercise of this peculiar power that some of the most marvellous feats of the Indian jugglers are performed, such as the celebrated basket trick, or that other in which a rope is thrown up towards the sky and remains rigid without support while the juggler climbs up it and disappears. The entire audience is in fact hallucinated, and the people are made to imagine that they see and hear a whole series of events which have not really occurred at all.

The power of glamour is simply that of making a clear strong mental image, and then projecting that into the mind of another. To most men this would seem well-nigh impossible, because they have never made any such attempt in their lives, and have no notion how to set about it. The mind of the fairy has not the width or the range of the man's, but it is thoroughly well accustomed to this work of making images and impressing them on others, since it is one of the principal occupations of the creature's daily life.

It is not remarkable that with such constant practice he should become expert at the business, and it is still further

simplified for him when, as in the case of the Indian tricks, exactly the same image has to be produced over and over again hundreds of times, until every detail shapes itself without effort as the result of unconscious habit. In trying to understand exactly how this is done, we must bear in mind that a mental image is a very real thing—a definite construction in mental matter, as has been explained in *Thought-Forms* (p. 37); and we must also remember that the line of communication between the mind and the dense physical brain passes through the astral and etheric counterparts of that brain, and that the line may be tapped and an impression introduced at any of these points.

Certain of the nature-spirits not infrequently exercise their talent for mimicry and mischief by appearing at spiritualistic seances held for physical phenomena. Any one who has been in the habit of attending on such occasions will recollect instances of practical joking and silly though usually good-natured horse-play; these almost always indicate the presence of some of these impish creatures, though they are sometimes due to the arrival of dead men who

were senseless enough during earth-life to consider such inanities amusing, and have not learnt wisdom since their death.

INSTANCES OF FRIENDSHIP

On the other hand there are instances in which some nature-spirits have made friends with individual human beings and offered them such assistance as lay in their power, as in the well-known stories told of Scotch brownies or of the fire-lighting fairies of spiritualistic literature; and it is on record that on rare occasions certain favoured men have been admitted to witness elfin revels and share for a time the elfin life. It is said that wild animals will approach with confidence some Indian yogis, recognising them as friends to all living creatures; similarly the elves will gather round one who has entered upon the Path of Holiness, finding his emanations less stormy and more agreeable than those of the man whose mind is still fixed upon worldly matters.

Occasionally fairies have been known to attach themselves to little children, and develop a strong attachment for them, especially for such as are dreamy and

imaginative, since they are able to see and delight in the thought-forms with which such a child surrounds himself. There have even been cases in which such creatures took a fancy to some unusually attractive baby, and made an attempt to carry it away into their own haunts—their intention being to save it from what seems to them the horrible fate of growing up into the average human being! Vague traditions of such attempts account for part of the folklore stories about changelings, though there is also another reason for them to which we shall refer later.

There have been times—more often in the past than in the present—when a certain class of these entities, roughly corresponding to humanity in size and appearance, made it a practice frequently to materialise, to make for themselves temporary but definite physical bodies, and by that means to enter into undesirable relations with such men and women as chose to put themselves in their way. From this fact, perhaps, come some of the stories of fauns and satyrs in the classical period; though those sometimes also refer to quite a different sub-human evolution.

WATER-SPIRITS

Abundant as are the fairies of the earth's surface almost anywhere away from the haunts of man, they are far outnumbered by the water-spirits—the fairies of the surface of the sea. There is just as much variety here as on land. The nature-spirits of the Pacific differ from those of the Atlantic, and those of the Mediterranean are quite distinct from either; the types that revel in the indescribably glorious blue of tropical oceans are far apart from those that dash through the foam of our cold grey northern seas. Dissimilar again are the spirits of the lake, the river and the waterfall, for they have many more points in common with the land fairies than have the nereids of the open sea.

These, like their brothers of the land, are of all shapes, but perhaps most frequently imitate the human. Broadly speaking, they tend to take larger forms than the elves of the woods and the hills; the majority of the latter are diminutive, while the sea-spirit who copies man usually adopts his size as well as his shape. In order to avoid misunderstanding it is necessary

constantly to insist upon the protean character of all these forms; any of these creatures, whether of land or sea or air, can make himself temporarily larger or smaller at will, or can assume whatever shape he chooses.

There is theoretically no restriction upon this power, but in practice it has its limits, though they are wide. A fairy who is naturally twelve inches in height can expand himself to the proportions of a man of six feet, but the effort would be a considerable strain, and could not be maintained for more than a few minutes. In order to take a form other than his own he must be able to conceive it clearly, and he can hold the shape only while his mind is fixed upon it; as soon as his thought wanders he will at once begin to resume his natural appearance.

Though etheric matter can readily be moulded by the power of thought, it naturally does not obey it as instantaneously as does astral matter; we might say that mental matter changes actually *with* the thought, and astral matter so quickly after it that the ordinary observer can scarcely note any difference; but with etheric matter

one's vision can follow the growth or diminution without difficulty. A sylph, whose body is of astral matter, *flashes* from one shape into another; a fairy, who is etheric, swells or decreases quickly but *not* instantaneously.

Few of the land-spirits are gigantic in size, while such stature seems quite common out at sea. The creatures of the land frequently weave from their fancies scraps of human clothing, and show themselves with quaint caps or baldrics or jerkins; but I have never seen any such appearance among the inhabitants of the sea. Nearly all these surface water-spirits seem to possess the power of raising themselves out of their proper element and floating in or flying through the air for a short distance; they delight in playing amidst the dashing foam or riding in upon the breakers. They are less pronounced in their avoidance of man than their brethren on land—perhaps because man has so much less opportunity of interfering with them. They do not descend to any great depth below the surface—never, at any rate, beyond the reach of light; so that there is always a considerable space between their realm and the

domain of the far less evolved creatures of the middle deeps.

FRESH-WATER FAIRIES

Some very beautiful species inhabit inland waters where man has not yet rendered the conditions impossible for them. Naturally enough, the filth and the chemicals with which water is polluted near any large town are disgusting to them; but they have apparently no objection to the water-wheel in a quiet country nook, for they may sometimes be seen disporting themselves in a mill-race. They seem specially to delight in falling water, just as their brothers of the sea revel in the breaking of foam; for the pleasure which it gives them they will sometimes even dare a nearer approach than usual to the hated presence of man. At Niagara, for example, there are almost always some still to be seen in the summer, though they generally keep well out towards the centre of the Falls and the Rapids. Like birds of passage, in winter they abandon those northern waters, which are frozen over for many months, and seek a temporary home in more genial

climes. A short frost they do not seem to mind; the mere cold has apparently little or no effect upon them, but they dislike the disturbance of their ordinary conditions. Some of those who commonly inhabit rivers transfer themselves to the sea when their streams freeze; to others salt water seems distasteful, and they prefer to migrate considerable distances rather than take refuge in the ocean.

An interesting variety of the fairies of the water are the cloud-spirits—entities whose life is spent almost entirely among those “waters which be above the firmament.” They should perhaps be classified as intermediate between the spirits of the water and those of the air; their bodies are of etheric matter, as are the former, but they are capable of remaining away from the water for comparatively long periods. Their forms are often huge and loosely knit; they seem near of kin to some of the fresh-water types, yet they are quite willing to dip for a time into the sea when the clouds which are their favourite habitat disappear. They dwell in the luminous silence of cloudland, and their favourite pastime is to mould their clouds into strange,

fantastic shapes or to arrange them in the serried ranks which we call a mackerel sky.

SYLPHS

We come now to the consideration of the highest type in the kingdom of the nature-spirits—the stage at which the lines of development both of the land and sea creatures converge—the sylphs, or spirits of the air. These entities are definitely raised above all the other varieties of which we have been speaking by the fact that they have shaken themselves free from the encumbrance of physical matter, the astral body being now their lowest vehicle. Their intelligence is much higher than that of the etheric species, and quite equal to that of the average man; but they have not yet attained a permanent reincarnating individuality. Just because they are so much more evolved, before breaking away from the group-soul they can understand much more about life than an animal can, and so it often happens that they know that they lack individuality and are intensely eager to gain it. That is the truth that lies at

the back of all the widely-spread traditions of the yearning of the nature-spirit to obtain an immortal soul.

The normal method for them to attain this is by association with and love for members of the next stage above them—the astral angels. A domestic animal, such as the dog or the cat, advances through the development of his intelligence and his affection which is the result of his close relationship with his master. Not only does his love for that master cause him to make determined efforts to understand him, but the vibrations of the master's mind-body constantly playing upon his rudimentary mind gradually awaken it into greater and greater activity; and in the same way his affection for him arouses an ever-deepening feeling in return. The man may or may not definitely set himself to teach the animal something; in any case, even without any direct effort, the intimate connexion between them helps the evolvment of the lower. Eventually the development of such an animal rises to the level which will allow him to receive the Third Outpouring, and thus he becomes an individual, and breaks away from his group-soul.

Now all this is also exactly what happens between the astral angel and the air-spirit, except that by them the scheme is usually carried out in a much more intelligent and effective manner. Not one man in a thousand thinks or knows anything about the real evolution of his dog or cat; still less does the animal comprehend the possibility that lies before him. But the angel clearly understands the plan of nature, and in many cases the nature-spirit also knows what he needs, and works intelligently towards its attainment. So each of these astral angels usually has several sylphs attached to him, frequently definitely learning from him and being trained by him, but at any rate basking in the play of his intellect and returning his affection. Very many of these angels are employed as agents by the Devarajas in their duty of the distributing of karma; and thus it comes that the air-spirits are often sub-agents in that work, and no doubt acquire much valuable knowledge while executing the tasks assigned to them.

The Adept knows how to make use of the services of the nature-spirits when he requires them, and there are many pieces

of business which he is able to entrust to them. In the issue of *Broad Views* for February 1907 there appeared an admirable account of the ingenious manner in which a nature-spirit executed a commission given to him in this way.

He was instructed to amuse an invalid who was suffering from an attack of influenza, and for five days he kept up an almost continuous entertainment of strange and interesting visions, his efforts being crowned with the most gratifying success, for the sufferer wrote that his ministrations "had the happy effect of turning what under ordinary circumstances would have been days of unutterable weariness and discomfort into a most wonderfully interesting experience."

He showed a bewildering variety of pictures, moving masses of rock, seen not from the outside but from the inside, so that faces of creatures of various sorts appeared in them. He also exhibited mountains, forests and avenues, and sometimes great masses of architecture, portions of Corinthian columns, bits of statuary, and great arched roofs, often also the most wonderful flowers and palms, waving to and fro as if in

a gentle breeze. Sometimes he seems to have taken the physical objects in the bedroom and woven them into a kind of magic transformation scene. One might indeed surmise, from the curious nature of the entertainment offered, the particular type to which belonged the nature-spirit who was employed in this charitable work.

The Oriental magician occasionally endeavours to obtain the assistance of the higher nature-spirits in his performances, but the enterprise is not without its dangers. He must adopt either invocation or evocation—that is, he must either attract their attention as a suppliant and make some kind of bargain with them, or he must try to set in motion influences which will compel their obedience—an attempt which, if it fails, will arouse a determined hostility that is exceedingly likely to result in his premature extinction, or at the least will put him in an extremely ridiculous and unpleasant position.

Of these air-spirits, as of the lower fairies, there are many varieties, differing in power, in intelligence and in habits as well as in appearance. They are naturally less restricted to locality than the other

kinds which we have described, though like the others they seem to recognise the limits of certain zones of elevation, some kinds always floating near the surface of the earth, while others scarcely ever approach it. As a general rule they share the common dislike to the neighbourhood of man and his restless desires, but there are occasions when they are willing to endure this for the sake of amusement or flattery.

THEIR AMUSEMENT

They extract immense entertainment sometimes out of the sport of ensouling thought-forms of various kinds. An author in writing a novel, for example, naturally makes strong thought-forms of all his characters, and moves them about his miniature stage like marionettes; but sometimes a party of jocund nature-spirits will seize upon his forms, and play out the drama upon a scheme improvised on the spur of the moment, so that the dismayed novelist feels that his puppets have somehow got out of hand and developed a will of their own.

The love of mischief which is so marked a characteristic of some of the fairies persists

to a certain extent among at least the lower types of the air-spirits, so that their impersonations are occasionally of a less innocent order. People whose evil karma has brought them under the domination of Calvinistic theology, but who have not yet the intelligence or the faith to cast aside its blasphemous doctrines, sometimes in their fear make awful thought-forms of the imaginary devil to which their superstition gives such a prominent rôle in the universe; and I regret to say that certain impish nature-spirits are quite unable to resist the temptation of masquerading in these terrible forms, and think it a great joke to flourish horns, to lash a forked tail, and to breathe out flames as they rush about. To anyone who understands the nature of these pantomime demons no harm is done; but now and then nervous children happen to be impressionable enough to catch a glimpse of such things, and if they have not been wisely taught, great terror is the result.

It is only fair to the nature-spirit to remember that, as he himself is incapable of fear, he does not in the least understand the gravity of this result, and probably considers the child's fright as simulated,

and as part of the game. We can hardly blame the nature-spirit for the fact that we permit our children to be bound by the chains of a grovelling superstition, and neglect to impress upon them the grand fundamental fact that God is love and that perfect love casteth out all fear. If our air-spirit occasionally thus terrifies the ill-instructed living child, it must on the other hand be set to his credit that he constantly affords the keenest pleasure to thousands of children who are what we call 'dead,' for to play with them and to entertain them in a hundred different ways is one of his happiest occupations.

The air-spirits have discovered the opportunity afforded to them by the spiritualistic séance, and some of them become habitual attendants, usually under some such name as Daisy or Sunflower. They are quite capable of giving a very interesting séance, for they naturally know a good deal about astral life and its possibilities. They will readily answer questions, truly enough as far as their knowledge goes, and with, at any rate, an appearance of profundity when the subject is somewhat beyond them. They can produce raps, tilts

and lights without difficulty, and are quite prepared to deliver whatever messages they may see to be desired—not in the least meaning in this way harm or deceit, but naively rejoicing in their success in playing the part, and in the wealth of awe-stricken devotion and affection lavished upon them as ‘dear spirits’ and ‘angel helpers’. They learn to share the delight of the sitters, and feel themselves to be doing a good work in thus bringing comfort to the afflicted.

Living astrally as they do, the fourth dimension is a commonplace fact of their existence, and this makes quite simple for them many little tricks which to us appear wonderful, such as the removal of articles from a locked box or the apport of flowers into a closed room. The desires and emotions of the sitters lie open before them, they quickly acquire facility in reading any but abstract thoughts, and the management of a materialisation is quite within their power when adequate material is provided. It will therefore be seen that without any exterior assistance they are competent to provide a varied and satisfactory evening’s entertainment, and there is no doubt that

they have often done so. I am not for a moment suggesting that nature-spirits are the only entities which operate at séances; the manifesting 'spirit' is often exactly what he claims to be, but it is also true that he is often nothing of the kind, and the average sitter has absolutely no means of distinguishing between the genuine article and the imitation.

AN ABNORMAL DEVELOPMENT

As has already been said, the normal line of advancement for the nature-spirit is to attain individuality by association with an angel, but there have been individuals who have departed from that rule. The intensity of affection felt by the sylph for the angel is the principal factor in the great change, and the abnormal cases are those in which that affection has been fixed upon a human being instead. This involves so complete a reversal of the common attitude of these beings towards humanity that its occurrence is naturally rare; but when it happens, and when the love is strong enough to lead to individualisation, it detaches the nature-spirit from

his own line of evolution and brings him over into ours, so that the newly developed ego will incarnate not as an angel but as a man.

Some tradition of this possibility lies at the back of all the stories in which a non-human spirit falls in love with a man, and yearns with a great longing to obtain an immortal soul in order to be able to spend eternity with him. Upon attaining his incarnation such a spirit usually makes a man of very curious type—affectionate and emotional but wayward, strangely primitive in certain ways, and utterly without any sense of responsibility.

It has sometimes happened that a sylph who was thus strongly attracted to a man or a woman, but just fell short of the intensity of affection necessary to ensure individualisation, has made an effort to obtain a forcible entrance into human evolution by taking possession of the body of a dying baby just as its original owner left it. The child would seem to recover, to be snatched back from the very jaws of death, but would be likely to appear much changed in disposition, and probably peevish and irritable in consequence

of the unaccustomed constraint of a dense physical body.

If the sylph were able to adapt himself to the body, there would be nothing to prevent him from retaining it through a life of the ordinary length. If during that life he succeeded in developing affection sufficiently ardent to sever his connection with his group-soul he would thereafter reincarnate as a human being in the usual way; if not, he would fall back at its conclusion into his own line of evolution. It will be seen that in these facts we have the truth which underlies the widely disseminated tradition of changelings, which is found in all the countries of north-western Europe, in China, and also (it is said) among the natives of the Pacific slope of North America.

THE ADVANTAGE OF STUDYING THEM

The kingdom of the nature-spirits is a most interesting field of study, to which but little attention has been paid. Though they are often mentioned in occult literature, I am not aware that any attempt has yet been made to classify them in scientific

fashion. This vast realm of nature still needs its Cuvier or its Linnæus; but perhaps when we have plenty of trained investigators we may hope that one of them will take upon himself this rôle, and furnish us as his life's work with a complete and detailed natural history of these delightful creatures.

It will be no waste of labour, no unworthy study. It is useful for us to understand these beings, not solely nor even chiefly because of the influence they exert upon us, but because the comprehension of a line of evolution so different from our own broadens our minds and helps us to recognise that the world does not exist for us alone, and that our point of view is neither the only one nor the most important. Foreign travel has the same effect in a minor degree, for it demonstrates to every unprejudiced man that races in every respect as good as his own may yet differ widely from it in a hundred ways. In the study of the nature-spirits we find the same idea carried much further; here is a kingdom radically dissimilar—without sex, free from fear, ignorant of what is meant by the struggle for existence—yet the

eventual result of its unfoldment is in every respect equal to that attained by following our own line. To learn this may help us to see a little more of the many-sidedness of the Solar Deity, and so may teach us modesty and charity as well as liberality of thought.

CHAPTER VII

BY CENTRES OF MAGNETISM

WE all recognise to some extent that unusual surroundings may produce special effects; we speak of certain buildings or landscapes as gloomy and depressing; we understand that there is something saddening and repellent about a prison, something devotional about a church, and so on. Most people never trouble to think why this should be so, or if they do for a moment turn their attention to the matter they dismiss it as an instance of the association of ideas.

Probably it is that, but it is also much more than that, and if we examine into its rationale we shall find that it operates in many cases where we have never suspected its influence, and that a knowledge of it may be of practical use in everyday life. A study of the finer forces of nature will show us not only that every living being

is radiating a complex set of definite influences upon those about him, but also that this is true to a lesser degree and in a simpler manner of inanimate objects.

OUR GREAT CATHEDRALS

We know that wood and iron and stone have their own respective characteristic radiations, but the point to be emphasized just now is that they are all capable of absorbing human influence, and then pouring it out again. What is the origin of that feeling of devotion, of reverential awe, which so permeates some of our great cathedrals that even the most hardened Cook's tourist cannot entirely escape it? It is due not only to the historical associations, not only to the *remembrance* of the fact that for centuries men have met here for praise and prayer, but far more to that fact itself, and to the conditions which it has produced in the substance of the fabric.

To understand this we must first of all remember the circumstances under which those buildings were erected. A modern brick church run up by contract in the shortest possible time has indeed but little

sanctity about it; but in mediæval days faith was greater, and the influence of the outer world less prominent. In very truth men prayed as they built our great cathedrals, and laid every stone as though it had been an offering upon an altar. When this was the spirit of the work, every such stone became a veritable talisman charged with the reverence and devotion of the builder, and capable of radiating those same waves of sensation upon others, so as to stir in them similar feelings. The crowds who came afterwards to worship at the shrine not only felt these radiations, but themselves strengthened them in turn by the re-action of their own feelings.

Still more is this true of the interior decorations of the church. Every touch of the brush in the colouring of a triptych, every stroke of the chisel in the sculpture of a statue, was a direct offering to God. Thus the completed work of art is surrounded by an atmosphere of reverence and love, and it distinctly sheds these qualities upon the worshippers. All of them, rich and poor alike, feel something of this effect, even though many of them may be too ignorant to receive the added stimulus which

its artistic excellence gives to those who are able to appreciate it and to perceive all that it means.

The sunlight streaming through the splendid stained glass of those mediæval windows brings with it a glory that is not all of the physical world, for the clever workmen who built up that marvellous mosaic did so for the love of God and the glory of His saints, and so each fragment of glass is a talisman also. Remembering always how the power conveyed into the statue or picture by the fervour of the original artist has been perpetually reinforced through the ages by the devotion of successive generations of worshippers, we come to understand the inner meaning of the great influence which undoubtedly does radiate from such objects as have been regarded as sacred for centuries.

Such a devotional effect as is described in connection with a picture or a statue may be entirely apart from its value as a work of art. The bambino at the Ara Coeli at Rome is a supremely inartistic object, yet it has unquestionably considerable power in evoking devotional feeling among the masses that crowd to see it.

If it were really a work of art, that fact would add but little to its influence over most of them, though of course it would in that case produce an additional and totally different effect upon another class of persons to whom now it does not in the least appeal.

From these considerations it is evident that these various ecclesiastical properties, such as statues, pictures and other decorations, have a real value in the effect which they produce upon the worshippers, and the fact that they thus have a distinct power, which so many people can feel, probably accounts for the intense hatred felt for them by the savage fanatics who miscalled themselves puritans. They realised that the power which stood behind the church worked to a great extent through these objects as its channels, and though their loathing for all higher influences was considerably tempered by fear, they yet felt that if they could break up these centres of magnetism, that would to a certain extent cut off the connection. And so in their revolt against all that was good and beautiful they did all the harm that they could—almost as much perhaps as

those earlier so-called Christians who, through sheer ignorance, ground up the most lovely Grecian statues to furnish lime to build their wretched hovels.

In all these splendid mediæval buildings the sentiment of devotion absolutely and literally exudes from the walls, because for centuries devotional thought-forms have been created in them by successive generations. In strong contrast to this is the atmosphere of criticism and disputation which may be felt by any sensitive person in the meeting-houses of some of the sects. In many a conventicle in Scotland and in Holland this feeling stands out with startling prominence, so as to give the impression that the great majority of the so-called worshippers have had no thought of worship or devotion at all, but only of the most sanctimonious self-righteousness, and of burning anxiety to discover some doctrinal flaw in the wearisome sermon of their unfortunate minister.

An absolutely new church does not at first produce any of these effects; for in these days workmen build a church with the same lack of enthusiasm as a factory. As soon as the bishop consecrates it, a

decided influence is set up as the effect of that ceremony, but the consideration of that belongs to another chapter of our work. A few years of use will charge the walls very effectively, and a much shorter period than that will produce the result in a church where the sacrament is reserved, or where perpetual adoration is offered. The Roman Catholic or Ritualistic church soon becomes thoroughly affected, but the meeting-houses of some of the dissenting sects which do not make a special point of devotion often produce for a long time an influence scarcely distinguishable from that which is to be felt in an ordinary lecture hall. A fine type of devotional influence is often to be found in the chapel of a convent or monastery, though again the type differs greatly according to the objects which the monks or the nuns set before themselves.

TEMPLES

I have been taking Christian fanes as an example because they are those which are most familiar to me—which will also be most familiar to the majority of my readers; also perhaps because Christianity is the

religion which has made a special point of devotion, and has, more than any other, arranged for the simultaneous expression of it in special buildings erected for that purpose. Among Hindus the Vaishnavite has a devotion quite as profound as that of any Christian, though unfortunately it is often tainted by expectation of favours to be given in return. But the Hindu has no idea of anything like combined worship. Though on great festivals enormous crowds attend the temples, each person makes his little prayer or goes through his little ceremony for himself, and so he misses the enormous additional effect which is produced by simultaneous action.

Regarded solely from the point of view of charging the walls of the temple with devotional influence, this plan differs from the other in a way that we may perhaps understand by taking a physical illustration of a number of sailors pulling at a rope. We know that, when that is being done, a sort of chant is generally used in order to ensure that the men shall apply their strength at exactly the same moment; and in that way a much more effective pull is produced than would be achieved if each

man put out exactly the same strength, but applied it just when he felt that he could, and without any relation to the work of the others.

Nevertheless as the years roll by there comes to be a strong feeling in a Vaishnavite temple—as strong perhaps as that of the Christian, though quite different in kind. Different again in quite another way is the impression produced in the great temples dedicated to Shiva. In such a shrine as that at Madura, for example, an exceedingly powerful influence radiates from the holy of holies. It is surrounded by a strong feeling of reverential awe, almost of fear, and this so deeply tinges the devotion of the crowds who come to worship that the very aura of the place is changed by it.

Completely different again is the impression which surrounds a Buddhist temple. Of fear we have there absolutely no trace whatever. We have perhaps less of direct devotion, for to a large extent devotion is replaced by gratitude. The prominent radiation is always one of joyfulness and love—an utter absence of anything dark or stern.

Another complete contrast is represented by the Muhammedan mosque; devotion of

a sort is present there also, but it is distinctly a militant devotion, and the particular impression that it gives one is that of a fiery determination. One feels that this population's comprehension of their creed may be limited, but there is no question whatever as to their dogged determination to hold by it.

The Jewish synagogue again is like none of the others, but has a feeling which is quite distinct, and curiously dual—exceptionally materialistic on one side, and on the other full of a strong pathetic longing for the return of vanished glories.

SITES AND RELICS

A partial recognition of another facet of the facts which we have been mentioning accounts for the choice of the site of many religious edifices. A church or a temple is frequently erected to commemorate the life and death of some saint, and in the first instance such a fane is built upon a spot which has some special connection with him. It may be the place where he died, the spot where he was born, or where some important event of his life occurred.

The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem and that of the Crucifixion at Jerusalem are instances of this, as is also the great Stupa at Buddhagaya where the Lord Gautama attained His Buddhahood, or the temple of the "Bishanpad" where it is supposed that Vishnu left His foot-mark. All such shrines are erected not so much from an historical sense which wishes to indicate for the benefit of posterity the exact spot where an important event happened, as with the idea that that spot is especially blessed, especially charged with a magnetism which will remain through the ages, and will radiate upon and benefit those who bring themselves within the radius of its influence. Nor is this universal idea without adequate foundation.

The spot at which the Lord BUDDHA gained the step which gives Him that august title is charged with a magnetism which causes it to glow forth like a sun for anyone who has clairvoyant vision. It is calculated to produce the strongest possible magnetic effect on anyone who is naturally sensitive to such influence, or who deliberately makes himself temporarily sensitive to such influence by putting himself in an attitude of heartfelt devotion.

In a recent article on Buddhagaya in *The Lotus Journal* Alcyone wrote:

“When I sat quietly under the tree for awhile with Mrs. Besant, I was able to see the Lord BUDDHA, as He had looked when He sat there. Indeed, the record of His meditation is still so strong that it needs only a little clairvoyance to see Him even now. I had the advantage of having met Him in that life in 588 B.C., and become one of His followers, so that it was easier for me to see Him again in this present life. But I think almost any one who is a little sensitive would see Him at Buddhagaya by staying quite quiet for a little time, because the air is full of His influence, and even now there are always great Devas bathing in the magnetism, and guarding the place.”

Other churches, temples or dagobas are sanctified by the possession of relics of some Great One, and here again the connection of ideas is obvious. It is customary for those who are ignorant of these matters to ridicule the idea of paying reverence to the fragment of bone which once belonged to a saint; but though reverence paid to the bone may

be out of place, the influence radiating from that bone may nevertheless be quite a real thing, and well worthy of serious attention. That the trade in relics has led, all the world over, to fraud on the one hand and blind credulity on the other is not a thing to be disputed; but that by no means alters the fact that a genuine relic may be a valuable thing. Whatever has been part of the physical body of a Great One, or even of the garments which have clothed that physical body, is impregnated with his personal magnetism. That means that it is charged with the powerful waves of thought and feeling which used to issue from him, just as an electrical battery may be charged.

Such force as it possesses is intensified and perpetuated by the thought-waves poured upon it as the years roll by, by the faith and devotion of the crowds who visit the shrine. This when the relic is genuine; but most relics are not genuine. Even then, though they have no initial strength of their own, they acquire much influence as time goes on, so that even a false relic is by no means without effect. Therefore anyone putting himself into

a receptive attitude, and coming into the immediate neighbourhood of a relic, will receive into himself its strong vibrations, and soon will be more or less attuned to them. Since those vibrations are unquestionably better and stronger than any which he is likely to generate on his own account, this is a good thing for him. For the time being it lifts him on to a higher level, it opens a higher world to him; and though the effect is only temporary, this cannot but be good for him—an event which will leave him, for the rest of his life, slightly better than if it had not occurred.

This is the rationale of pilgrimages, and they are quite often really effective. In addition to whatever may have been the original magnetism contributed by the holy man or relic, as soon as the place of pilgrimage is established and numbers of people begin to visit it another factor comes into play, of which we have already spoken in the case of churches and temples. The place begins to be charged with the devotional feeling of all these hosts of visitors, and what they leave behind re-acts upon their successors. Thus the influence of one

of these holy places usually does not decrease as time passes, for if the original force tends slightly to diminish, on the other hand it is constantly fed by new accessions of devotion. Indeed, the only case in which the power ever fades is that of a neglected shrine—as, for example, when a country is conquered by people of another religion, to whom the older shrines are as nothing. Even then the influence, if it has been originally sufficiently strong, persists almost without diminution for many centuries, and for this reason even ruins have often a powerful force connected with them.

The Egyptian religion, for example, has been practised little since the Christian era, yet no sensitive person can stand amidst the ruins of one of its temples without being powerfully affected by the stream of its thought. In this particular instance another force comes into play; the Egyptian architecture was of a definite type, intentionally so erected for the purpose of producing a definite impression upon its worshippers, and perhaps no architecture has ever fulfilled its purpose more effectively.

The shattered fragments which remain still produce that effect to no inconsiderable

degree, even upon members of an alien race altogether out of touch with the type of the old Egyptian civilisation. For the student of comparative religion who happens to be sensitive, there can be no more interesting experience than this to bathe in the magnetism of the older religions of the world, to feel their influence as their devotees felt it thousands of years ago, to compare the sensations of Thebes or Luxor with those of the Parthenon or of the beautiful Greek temples of Girgenti, or those of Stonehenge with the vast ruins of Yucatan.

RUINS

The religious life of the old world can best be sensed in this way through the agency of its temples; but it is equally possible in the same way to come into touch with the daily life of those vanished nations, by standing among the ruins of their palaces and their homes. This needs perhaps a keener clairvoyant sense than the other. The force which permeates the temple is powerful because it is to a considerable extent one-pointed—because all through the

centuries people have come to it with one leading idea of prayer or devotion, and so the impression made has been comparatively powerful. In their homes, on the other hand, they have lived out their lives with all kinds of different ideas and warring interests, so that the impressions often cancel one another.

Nevertheless there emerges, as years roll on, a sort of least common multiple of all their feelings, which is characteristic of them as a race, and this can be sensed by one who has the art of entirely suppressing those personal feelings of his own, which are so far nearer and more vivid to him, and listening earnestly to catch the faint echo of the life of those times so long ago. Such study often enables one to take a juster view of history; manners and customs which startle and horrify us, because they are so remote from our own, can in this way be contemplated from the point of view of those to whom they were familiar; and in seeing them thus, one often realises for the first time how entirely we have misconceived those men of the past.

Some of us may remember how, in our childhood, ignorant though well-meaning

relations endeavoured to excite our sympathy by stories of Christian martyrs who were thrown to the lions in the Colosseum at Rome, or reprobated with horror the callous brutality which could assemble thousands to enjoy the combats between gladiators. I am not prepared to defend the tastes and amusements of the ancient Roman citizen, yet I think that any sensitive person who will go to the Colosseum at Rome and (if he can for the moment escape from the tourist) sit down there quietly, and let his consciousness drift backwards in time until he can sense the real feeling of those enormous wildly-excited audiences, will find that he has done them a gross injustice.

First, he will realise that the throwing of Christians to the lions *because of their religious belief* is a pious falsehood of the unprincipled early Christians. He will find that the government of Rome was in religious matters distinctly more tolerant than most European governments at the present day; that no person was ever executed or persecuted on account of any religious opinion whatever, and that those so-called Christians who were put to death suffered not in the least because of their alleged

religion, but because of conspiracy against the State, or of crimes which we should all join in reprobating.

He will find that the government allowed and even encouraged gladiatorial combats, but he will also find that only three classes of people took part in them. First, condemned criminals—men whose lives had been forfeited to the law of the time—were utilised to provide a spectacle for the people—a degrading spectacle certainly, but not in any way more so than many which receive popular approval at the present day. The malefactor was killed in the arena, fighting either against another malefactor or a wild beast; but he preferred to die fighting rather than at the hands of the law, and there was always just a possibility that if he fought well he might thereby contrive to earn the applause of the fickle population, and so save his life.

The second class consisted of such prisoners of war as it was the fashion of the time to put to death; but in this case also these were people whose death was already decided upon, and this particular form of death utilised them for a certain form of popular entertainment, and also gave them a

chance of saving their lives, at which they eagerly grasped. The third class were the professional gladiators, men like the prize-fighters of the present day, men who took up this horrible line of life for the sake of the popularity which it brought—accepting it with their eyes fully open to its dangers.

I am not for a moment suggesting that the gladiatorial show was a form of entertainment which could possibly be tolerated by a really enlightened people; but if we are to apply the same standard now we shall have to admit that no enlightened nations have yet come into existence, for it was no worse than the mediæval tournaments, than the cock-fighting and bear-baiting of a century ago, or than the bull-fight or prize-fight of the present day. Nor is there anything to choose between the brutality of its supporters and that of the people who go in vast crowds to see how many rats a dog can kill in a minute, or that of the noble sportsmen who (without the excuse of anything in the nature of a fair fight) go out to slaughter hundreds of inoffensive partridges.

We are beginning to set a somewhat higher value on human life than they did

in the days of ancient Rome; but even so I would point out that that change does not mark a difference between the ancient Roman race and its reincarnation in the English people, for our own race was equally callous about wholesale slaughter up to a century ago. The difference is not between us and the Romans, but between us and our very recent ancestors; for the crowds which in the days of our fathers went and jested at a public execution can hardly be said to have advanced much since the time when they crowded the benches of the Colosseum.

It is true that the Roman Emperors attended those exhibitions, as the English Kings used to encourage the tournament, and as the Kings of Spain even now patronise the bull-fight; but in order to understand the varied motives which led them to do this we must make a thorough study of the politics of the time—a matter which is quite outside the scope of this book. Here it must suffice to say that the Roman citizens were a body of men in a very curious political position, and that the authorities considered it necessary to provide them with constant entertainments in order to

keep them in a good humour. Therefore they hit upon this method of utilising what they regarded as the necessary and customary execution of criminals and rebels, in order to provide for the proletariat a kind of entertainment which it enjoyed. A very brutal proletariat, you will say. One must certainly admit that they were not highly advanced, but at least they were far better than those much later specimens who took active part in the unspeakable horrors of the French Revolution, for these last felt an active delight in blood and cruelty, which were only unnoticed concomitants of the enjoyment in the case of the Roman.

Any one who, standing in the Colosseum, as I have said, will really allow himself to feel the true spirit of those crowds of long ago, will understand that what appealed to them was the excitement of the contest and the skill exhibited in it. Their brutality consisted not in the fact that they enjoyed bloodshed and suffering, but that in the excitement of watching the struggle they were able to ignore it—which after all is very much what we do when we eagerly follow in the columns of our newspapers the news from the seat of war in the

present day. Level for level, case for case, we of the fifth sub-race have made a slight advance from the condition of the fourth sub-race of two thousand years ago; but that advance is much slighter than our self-satisfaction has persuaded us.

Every country has its ruins, and in all alike the study of the older life is an interesting study. A good idea of the wonderfully varied activities and interests of the mediæval monastic life in England may be obtained by visiting that queen of ruins, Fountains Abbey, just as by visiting the stones of Carnac (not in Egypt but in Morbihan) one may watch the midsummer rejoicings round the *tantad* or sacred fire of the ancient Bretons.

There is perhaps less necessity to study the ruins of India, since daily life there has remained so unchanged throughout the ages that no clairvoyant faculty is required to picture it as it was thousands of years ago. None of the actual buildings of India go back to any period of appreciable difference, and in most cases the relics of the golden age of India under the great Atlantean monarchies are already deeply buried. If we turn to mediæval times,

the effect of environment and religion on practically the same people is curiously illustrated by the difference in feeling between any ancient city of the north of India and the ruins of Anuradhapura in Ceylon.

MODERN CITIES

Just as our ancestors of long ago lived their ordinary lives in what was to them the ordinary commonplace way, and never dreamed that in doing so they were impregnating the stones of their city walls with influences which would enable a psychometer thousands of years afterwards to study the inmost secrets of their existence, so we ourselves are impregnating *our* cities and leaving behind us a record which will shock the sensibilities of the more developed men of the future. In certain ways which will readily suggest themselves, all great towns are much alike; but on the other hand there are differences of local atmosphere, depending to some extent upon the average morality of the city, the type of religious views most largely held in it, and its principal trades and manufactures. For all these reasons each city has a certain

amount of individuality—an individuality which will attract some people and repel others, according to their disposition. Even those who are not specially sensitive can hardly fail to note the distinction between the feeling of Paris and that of London, between Edinburgh and Glasgow, or between Philadelphia and Chicago.

There are some cities whose keynote is not of the present but of the past—whose life in earlier days was so much more forcible than it is now, that the present is dwarfed by its comparison. The cities on the Zuyder Zee in Holland are an instance of this; S. Albans in England is another. But the finest example which the world has to offer is the immortal city of Rome. Rome stands alone among the cities of the world in having three great and entirely separate interests for the psychic investigator. First, and much the strongest, is the impression left by the astonishing vitality and vigour of that Rome which was the centre of the world, the Rome of the Republic and the Cæsars; then comes another strong and unique impression—that of mediæval Rome, the ecclesiastical centre of the world; third and quite different from either, the

modern Rome of to-day, the political centre of the somewhat loosely integrated Italian kingdom, and at the same time still an ecclesiastical centre of widespread influence, though shorn of much of its glory and power.

I first went to Rome, I confess, with the expectation that the Rome of the mediæval Popes, with the assistance of all the world-thought that must for so long have been centred upon it, and with the advantage also of being so much nearer to us in time, would have to a considerable extent blotted out the life of the Rome of the Cæsars. I was startled to find that the actual facts are almost exactly the reverse of that. The conditions of Rome in the Middle Ages were sufficiently remarkable to have stamped an indelible character upon any other town in the world; but so enormously stronger was the amazingly vivid life of that earlier civilisation, that it still stands out, in spite of all the history that has been made there since, as the one ineffaceable and dominating characteristic of Rome.

To the clairvoyant investigator, Rome is (and ever will be) first of all the Rome of

the Cæsars, and only secondarily the Rome of the Popes. The impression of ecclesiastical history is all there, recoverable to the minutest detail; a bewildering mass of devotion and intrigue, of insolent tyranny and real religious feeling; a history of terrible corruption and of world-wide power, but rarely used as well as it might have been. And yet, mighty as it is, it is dwarfed into absolute insignificance by the grander power that went before it. There was a robustness of faith in himself, a conviction of destiny, a resolute intention to live his life to the utmost, and a certainty of being able to do it, about the ancient Roman, which few nationalities of to-day can approach.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Not only has a city as a whole its general characteristics, but such of the buildings in it as are devoted to special purposes have always an aura characteristic of that purpose. The aura of a hospital, for example, is a curious mixture; a preponderance of suffering, weariness and pain, but also a good deal of pity for the suffering,

and a feeling of gratitude on the part of the patients for the kindly care which is taken of them.

The neighbourhood of a prison is decidedly to be avoided when a man is selecting a residence, for from it radiate the most terrible gloom and despair and settled depression, mingled with impotent rage, grief and hatred. Few places have on the whole a more unpleasant aura around them; and even in the general darkness there are often spots blacker than the rest, cells of unusual horror round which an evil reputation hangs. For example, there are several cases on record in which the successive occupants of a certain cell in a prison have all tried to commit suicide, those who were unsuccessful explaining that the idea of suicide persistently arose in their minds, and was steadily pressed upon them from without, until they were gradually brought into a condition in which there seemed to be no alternative. There have been instances in which such a feeling was due to the direct persuasion of a dead man; but also and more frequently it is simply that the first suicide has charged the cell so thoroughly with thoughts and suggestions of this

nature that the later occupants, being probably persons of no great strength or development of will, have found themselves practically unable to resist.

More terrible still are the thoughts which still hang round some of the dreadful dungeons of mediæval tyrannies, the oubettlies of Venice or the torture-dens of the Inquisition. Just in the same way the very walls of a gambling-house radiate grief, envy, despair and hatred, and those of the public-house, or house of ill-fame, absolutely reek with the coarsest forms of sensual and brutal desire.

CEMETERIES

In such cases as those mentioned above, it is easy enough for all decent people to escape the pernicious influences simply by avoiding the place; but there are other instances in which people are placed in undesirable situations through the indulgence of natural good feeling. In countries which are not civilised enough to burn their dead, survivors constantly haunt the graves in which decaying physical bodies are laid; from a feeling of affectionate remembrance

they gather often to pray and meditate there, and to lay wreaths of flowers upon the tombs. They do not understand that the radiations of sorrow, depression and helplessness which so frequently permeate the church-yard or cemetery make it an eminently undesirable place to visit. I have seen old people walking and sitting about in some of our more beautiful cemeteries, and nurse-maids wheeling along young children in their perambulators to take their daily airing, neither of them probably having the least idea that they are subjecting themselves and their charges to influences which will most likely neutralise all the good of the exercise and the fresh air; and this quite apart from the possibility of unhealthy physical exhalations.

UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOLS

The ancient buildings of our great universities are surrounded with magnetism of a special type, which does much towards setting upon its graduates that peculiar seal which is so readily distinguishable, even though it is not easy to say in so many words exactly of what it consists.

Men attending the university are of many and various types—reading men, hunting men, pious men, careless men; and sometimes one college of a university attracts only one of these classes. In that case its walls become permeated with those characteristics, and its atmosphere operates to keep up its reputation. But on the whole the university is surrounded with a pleasant feeling of work and comradeship, of association yet of independence, a feeling of respect for the traditions of the *Alma Mater* and the resolve to uphold them, which soon brings the new undergraduate into line with his fellows and imposes upon him the unmistakable university tone.

Not unlike this is the influence exerted by the buildings of our great public schools. The impressionable boy who comes to one of these soon feels about him a sense of order and regularity and *esprit de corps*, which once gained can scarcely be forgotten. Something of the same sort, but perhaps even more pronounced, exists in the case of a battleship, specially if she is under a popular captain and has been some little time in commission. There also the new recruit very quickly finds his place, soon acquires the *esprit de corps*, soon

learns to feel himself one of a family whose honour he is bound to uphold. Much of this is due to the example of his fellows and to the pressure of the officers; but the feeling, the atmosphere of the ship herself undoubtedly bears a share in it also.

LIBRARIES, MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

The studious associations of a library are readily comprehensible, but those of museums and picture-galleries are much more varied, as might be expected. In both these latter cases the influence is principally from the pictures or the objects shown, and consequently our discussion of it is part of a later chapter. As far as the influence of the actual buildings is concerned, apart from the objects exhibited in them, the result is a little unexpected, for a prominent feature is a quite overwhelming sense of fatigue and boredom. It is evident that the chief constituent in the minds of the majority of the visitors is the feeling that they know that they ought to admire or to be interested in this or that, whereas as a matter of fact they are quite unable to achieve the least real admiration or interest.

THE STOCK-YARDS OF CHICAGO

The awful emanations from the stock-yards in Chicago, and the effect they produce on those who are so unfortunate as to live anywhere near them, have often been mentioned in Theosophical literature. Mrs. Besant herself has described how on her first visit she felt the terrible pall of depression which they cause while she was yet in the train many miles from Chicago; and though other people, less sensitive than she, might not be able to detect it so readily, there can be no doubt that its influence lies heavily upon them whenever they draw near to the theatre of that awful iniquity. On that spot millions of creatures have been slaughtered, and every one of them has added to its radiations its own feelings of rage and pain and fear and the sense of injustice; and out of it all has been formed one of the blackest clouds of horror at present existing in the world.

In this case the results of the influence are commonly known, and it is impossible for anyone to profess incredulity. The low level of morality and the exceeding

brutality of the slaughterman are matters of notoriety. In many of the murders committed in that dreadful neighbourhood the doctors have been able to recognise a peculiar twist of the knife which is used only by slaughtermen, and the very children in the streets play no games but games of killing. When the world becomes really civilised men will look back with incredulous horror upon such scenes as these, and will ask how it could have been possible that people who in other respects seem to have had some gleams of humanity and commonsense could permit so appalling a blot upon their honour as is the very existence of this accursed thing in their midst.

SPECIAL PLACES

Any spot where some ceremony has been frequently repeated, especially if in connection with it a high ideal has been set up, is always charged with a decided influence. For example, the hamlet of Oberammergau, where for many years at set intervals the passion play has been reproduced, is full of thought-forms of the previous performances, which react powerfully upon those who

are preparing themselves to take part in a modern representation. An extraordinary sense of reality and of the deepest earnestness is felt by all those who assist, and it reacts even upon the comparatively careless tourist, to whom the whole thing is simply an exhibition. In the same way the magnificent ideals of Wagner are prominent in the atmosphere of Bayreuth, and they make a performance there a totally different thing from one by identically the same players anywhere else.

SACRED MOUNTAINS

There are instances in which the influence attached to a special place is non-human. This is usually the case with the many sacred mountains of the world. I have described in a previous chapter the great angels who inhabit the summit of the mountain of Slieve-na-Mon in Ireland. It is their presence which makes the spot sacred, and they perpetuate the influence of the holier magic of the leaders of the Tuatha-de-Danaan, which they ordained to remain until the day of the future greatness of Ireland shall come, and its part in the mighty drama of empire shall be made clear.

I have several times visited a sacred mountain of a different type—Adam's Peak in Ceylon. The remarkable thing about this peak is that it is held as a sacred spot by people of all the various religions of the Island. The Buddhists give to the temple on its summit the name of the shrine of the Sripada or holy foot-print, and their story is that when the Lord BUDDHA visited Ceylon in His astral body (He was never there in the physical) He paid a visit to the tutelary genius of that mountain, who is called by the people Saman' Deviyo. Just as He was about to depart, Saman Deviyo asked Him as a favour to leave on that spot some permanent memory of His visit, and the BUDDHA in response is alleged to have pressed His foot upon the solid rock, utilising some force which made upon it a definite imprint or indentation.

The story goes on to say that Saman Deviyo, in order that this holy foot-print should never be defiled by the touch of man, and that the magnetism radiating from it should be preserved, covered it with a huge cone of rock, which makes the present summit of the mountain. On the top of this cone a hollow has been made which

roughly resembles a huge foot, and it seems probable that some of the more ignorant worshippers believe that to be the actual mark made by the Lord BUDDHA; but all the monks who know emphatically deny that, and point to the fact that this is not only enormously too large to be a human foot-print, but that it is also quite obviously artificial.

They explain that it is made there simply to indicate the exact spot under which the true foot-print lies, and they point to the fact that there is unquestionably a crack running all round the rock at some distance below the summit. The idea of a sacred foot-print on that summit seems to be common to the various religions, but while the Buddhists hold it to be that of the Lord BUDDHA, the Tamil inhabitants of the island suppose it to be one of the numerous foot-prints of Vishnu, and the Christians and the Muhammedans attribute it to Adam—whence the name Adam's Peak.

But it is said that long before any of these religions had penetrated to the island, long before the time of the Lord BUDDHA Himself, this peak was already sacred to

Saman Deviyo, to whom the deepest reverence is still paid by the inhabitants—as indeed it well may be, since He belongs to one of the great orders of the angels who rank near to the highest among the Adepts. Although His work is of a nature entirely different from ours, He also obeys the Head of the Great Occult Hierarchy; He also is one of the Great White Brotherhood which exists only for the purpose of forwarding the evolution of the world.

The presence of so great a being naturally sheds a powerful influence over the mountain and its neighbourhood, and most of all over its summit, so that there is emphatically a reality behind to account for the joyous enthusiasm so freely manifested by the pilgrims. Here also, as at other shrines, we have in addition to this the effect of the feeling of devotion with which successive generations of pilgrims have impregnated the place, but though that cannot but be powerful, it is yet in this case completely overshadowed by the original and ever-present influence of the mighty entity who has done His work and kept His guard there for so many thousands of years.

SACRED RIVERS

There are sacred rivers also—the Ganges, for example. The idea is that some great person of old has magnetised the source of the river with such power that all the water that henceforth flows out from that source is in a true sense holy water, bearing with it his influence and his blessing. This is not an impossibility, though it would require either a great reserve of power in the beginning or some arrangement for a frequent repetition. The process is simple and comprehensible; the only difficulty is what may be called the size of the operation. But what would be beyond the power of the ordinary man might possibly be quite easy to some one at a much higher level.

CHAPTER VIII

BY CEREMONIES

IN considering the influence exerted by our cathedrals and churches we have hitherto concerned ourselves with that which radiates from their walls. That is, however, only one small part of the effect that they are intended to produce upon the community—only incidental to the great plan of the Founder of the religion; and even that plan in turn is only part of a still mightier scheme. Let me try to explain.

THE HIERARCHY

Theosophical students are familiar with the fact that the direction of the evolution of the world is vested in the Hierarchy of Adepts, working under one great Leader, and that one of the departments of this government is devoted to the promotion and management of religion. The official

in charge of that department is called in the East the Bodhisattva, and is known to us in the West as the Christ, though that is really the title of only one of His incarnations. The plan of the government is that during each world-period there shall be seven successive Christs—one for each root-race. Each of these in succession holds this office of Bodhisattva, and during His term of office He is in charge of all the religious thought of the world, not only of that of His own special root-race; and He may incarnate many times.

To illustrate exactly what is meant, let us take the case of the previous holder of this office, whom we know as the Lord Gautama. He was technically the Bodhisattva of the Atlantean or fourth root-race, and in that He incarnated many times under different names through a period spreading over several hundreds of thousands of years; but though His special work thus lay with the fourth root-race, He was in charge of the religions of the whole world, and consequently He did not neglect the fifth root-race. In the earlier part of the history of each of its sub-races He appeared and founded a special

religion. In the first sub-race He was the original Vyasa; the name which He bore in the second sub-race has not been preserved in history. In the third sub-race He was the original Zoroaster, the first of a long line who bore that name. For the great religion of Egypt He was Thoth—called by the Greeks Hermes Trismegistus, Hermes the Thrice-Greatest, and among the early Greeks of the fourth sub-race He was Orpheus the Bard, the founder of their mysteries.

In each of such births He drew round Him a number of earnest disciples, naturally in many cases the same egos over again in new bodies, although He was steadily adding to their number. The fourth root-race has by no means finished its evolution, for the majority of the earth's inhabitants still belong to it—the vast hosts of Chinese, Tartars, Japanese, Malays and all the undeveloped peoples of the earth; but it has long passed its prime, the time when it was the dominant race of the world, and when all the most advanced egos were incarnated in it. When the glory had finally passed from it the Bodhisattva prepared for the culminating act of His work, which

involves for Him the attainment of that very high level of Initiation which we call the Buddhahood, and also the resigning of His office into the hands of His successor.

The preparation required was to bring together into one country, and even to a great extent into one part of that country, all the egos who had been His special followers in the different lives which lay behind Him. Then He Himself incarnated among them—or perhaps more probably one of His highest disciples incarnated among them and yielded up his body to the Bodhisattva when the appointed time drew near; and as soon as in that body He had taken the great Initiation and become the BUDDHA, He went forth to preach His Law. We must not attach to that word Law the ordinary English meaning, for it goes very much further than a mere set of commands. We must take it rather to signify His presentation of the Truth about humanity and its evolution, and His instructions, based upon that truth, as to how a man should act so as to co-operate in the scheme of that evolution.

Preaching this Law He drew round Him all the hosts of His old disciples, and by the tremendous power and magnetism which

belonged to Him as the BUDDHA. He enabled large numbers of them to take that fourth step on the Path, to which is given the name of the Arhat. He spent the rest of His life on earth in preaching and consolidating this new faith, and when He passed away from physical life He definitely handed over His office of director of religion to His successor, whom we call the Lord Maitreya—the Great One who is honoured all through India under the name of Krishna and throughout the Christian world as Jesus the Christ. No Theosophical student will be confused by this last expression, for he knows that the Christ, who is the new Bodhisattva, took the body of the disciple Jesus and held it for the last three years of its life in order to found the Christian religion. After its death He continued for some years to teach His more immediate disciples from the astral world, and from that time to this He has employed that disciple Jesus (now Himself a Master) to watch over and guide as far as may be the destinies of His Church.

Immediately upon taking over the office, the Lord Maitreya availed Himself of the extraordinarily good conditions left behind

Him by the BUDDHA to make several simultaneous attempts to promote the religious progress of the world. He not only descended into an almost immediate incarnation Himself, but He at the same time employed a number of those who had attained the Arhat level under the Lord BUDDHA, and were now ready to take rebirth at once. From this band of disciples came those whom we call Lao-tse and Confucius, who were sent to incarnate in China. From them also came Plato, and from among their followers Phidias and many another of the greatest of the Greeks.

Within the same area of time came the great philosopher Pythagoras, who is now our Master K.H. He was not one of the immediate attendants of the Lord BUDDHA, as He had already attained the Arhat level and was needed for work elsewhere, but He travelled over to India to see Him and to receive His blessing. He also is upon the line of the Bodhisattva, and may be regarded as one of His foremost lieutenants.

Simultaneously with all these efforts the Lord Maitreya Himself incarnated as Krishna, and led in India a very wonderful life, upon which is founded the devotional

aspect of the religion of that country, which shows us perhaps the most fervent examples of utter devotion to be seen anywhere in the world. This great incarnation must not be confounded with that of the Krishna described in the *Mahabharata*; the latter was a warrior and a statesman, and lived some two thousand five hundred years before the time of which we are speaking.

Along with this came another great incarnation—not this time from the department of religion, but rather from one of the departments of organisation—the great Shankaracharya, who travelled over India, founding the four chief monasteries and the Sannyasi order. Some confusion has been created by the fact that each of the long line of those who have since stood at the head of the monastic organisations has also taken the title of Shankaracharya, so that to speak of Shankaracharya is like speaking of the Pope without indicating which particular holder of the Papal Chair is intended. The great Founder to whom we have referred must not be confused with the better known holder of the office who some seven hundred years after Christ wrote a voluminous series

of commentaries on the *Bhagavad-Gita* and some of the Upanishads.

THE THREE PATHS

These three great Teachers, who followed one another so quickly in India, furnished between them a fresh impulse along each of the three paths. The BUDDHA founded a religion giving minute directions for daily life, such as would be needed by those who should follow the path of action, while Shankaracharya provided the metaphysical teaching for those to whom the path is wisdom, and the Lord Maitreya (manifesting as Krishna) provided a supreme object of devotion for those to whom that is the most direct road to the truth. But Christianity must be considered as the first effort of the new Bodhisattva to build a religion which should go abroad into new countries, for His work as Krishna had been intended especially for India. For those who penetrate behind the external manifestation to the inner and mystical meaning, it will be significant that the ray or type to which belong the Lord BUDDHA, the Bodhisattva and our Master K. H. is in a special sense

a manifestation of the second aspect of the Solar Deity—the second person of the Blessed Trinity.

Religion has an objective side to it; it acts not only from within by stirring up the hearts and minds of its votaries, but also from without by arranging that uplifting and refining influences shall play constantly upon their various vehicles. The temple or the church is meant to be not merely a place of worship, but also a centre of magnetism, through which spiritual forces can be poured out upon the district surrounding it. People often forget that even the Great Ones must do their work subject to the laws of nature, and that it is for them an actual duty to economise their force as much as possible, and therefore to do whatever they have to do in the easiest possible manner.

In this case, for example, if the object be to let spiritual force shine forth over a certain district, it would not be economical to pour it down indiscriminately everywhere, like rain, since that would require that the miracle of its materialisation to a lower level should be performed in millions of places simultaneously, once for every

drop, as it were, and each representing a mighty effort. Far simpler would it be to establish at certain points definite magnetic centres, where the machinery of such materialisation should be permanently set up, so that by pouring in only a little force from above it should instantly be spread abroad over a considerable area.

This had been achieved in earlier religions by the establishment of strongly magnetised centres, such as are offered by the image or by the lingam in a Hindu temple, by the altar of the sacred fire among the Parsis, or by the statue of the Lord BUDDHA among the Buddhists. As each worshipper comes before one of these symbols and pours himself out in devotion or gratitude, he not only draws down the answering force upon himself, but also causes a certain radiation upon those for some distance round him.

In founding the religion of Christianity the Bodhisattva tried a new experiment with the view of securing at least once daily a much more thorough and effective distribution of spiritual force. The fact that new experiments of this sort *may* be tried—that though the splendid system of the

Hierarchy is unalterably founded upon the Rock of Ages, it yet permits so much of freedom to its Officials—is surely of deepest interest. It shows us that that organisation which is in all the world the most utterly conservative is yet at the same time amazingly liberal, and that the oldest form of government is also the most adaptable. It is only in reference to the august Head of the Hierarchy that we can use to the fullest extent those grand old words of a collect of the Church of England: “In His service is perfect freedom.”

Perhaps the most readily comprehensible way of explaining this new scheme will be to describe the way in which I myself was first enabled to see something of the details of its working. But first I must say a few words as to the present condition of the Christian Church.

As we see that Church now it is but a poor representation of what its Founder meant it to be. Originally it had its higher mysteries, like all other faiths, and its three stages of purification, illumination and perfection, through which its children had to pass. With the expulsion as heretics of the great Gnostic doctors this

aspect of the truth was lost to the Church, and the only idea which it now places before its members is the first of the three stages, and even that not understandingly. Origen, one of the greatest men that it has ever produced, described very clearly the two kinds of Christianity—the somatic or physical and the spiritual—saying that the former is meant only to attract the ignorant masses, but that the latter is for those who know. In these days the Church has forgotten that true spiritual and higher side of her teaching, and has busied herself with pitiful attempts to explain that there is somehow or other a spiritual side to the lower teaching which is practically all that she has left.

CHRISTIAN MAGIC

Nevertheless, and in spite of all this, the old magic which was instituted by her Founder is still working and effective; so even in these days of her decadence she is still definitely under guidance and control. There is still a real and a vital power in the sacraments when truly performed—the power of the Solar Deity Himself—and it

comes through Him whom we call the Master Jesus, this being His special department.

It was not He, but the Christ—the Lord Maitreya—who founded the religion, but nevertheless the special charge of Christianity has been given into the hands of Him who yielded His body for the work of the Founder. Belief in His personal interest in the Christian Church has almost died out in many branches of it; the members think of Him as a Teacher who lived two thousand years ago rather than as an active power in the Church to-day. They have forgotten that He is still a living force, a real presence—truly with us always, even to the end of the world, as He has said. Not God in the idolatrous sense, yet the channel through which the Divine power has reached many millions—the official in charge of the devotional department of the work of the Christ.

The Church has turned aside widely from the course originally marked out for it. It was meant to meet all types; now it meets only one, and that very imperfectly. The reconstruction of the links must come, and as intellectual activity is the sign of our time and of the latest sub-race, the intellectual.

revival which shows itself in the higher criticism has for its very purpose that of enabling religion to meet another type of mind. If only the priests and the teachers had the advantage of direct knowledge, they would be able to deal with and to help their people in this crisis—to guide their intellectual activity by means of their own knowledge of the truth, and to keep alive in the hearts of their flock the spirituality without which the intellectual effort can be but barren.

Not only has the Church almost entirely forgotten the original doctrine taught by her Founder, but most of her priests have now little conception of the real meaning and power of the ceremonies which they have to perform. It is probable that the Christ foresaw that this would happen, for He has carefully arranged that the ceremonies should work even though neither celebrants nor people have any intelligent comprehension of their methods or their results. It would be difficult to explain the outline of His plan to the average Christian; to the Theosophist it ought to be more readily comprehensible, because he is already familiar with some of the general ideas involved in it.

We who are students have often heard of the great reservoir of force which is constantly being filled by the Nirmanakayas in order that its contents may be utilised by members of the Adept Hierarchy and Their pupils for the helping of the evolution of mankind. The arrangement made by the Christ with regard to His religion was that a kind of special compartment of that reservoir should be reserved for its use, and that a certain set of officials should be empowered by the use of certain special ceremonies, certain words and signs of power, to draw upon it for the spiritual benefit of their people.

The scheme adopted for passing on the power is what is called ordination, and thus we see at once the real meaning of the doctrine of the apostolic succession, about which there has been so much of argument. I myself held strongly to that doctrine while officiating as a priest of the Church; but when through the study of Theosophy I came to understand religion better and to take a far wider view of life, I began to doubt whether in reality the succession meant so much as we of the ritualistic party had supposed. With still further study,

however, I was rejoiced to find that there was a real foundation for the doctrine, and that it meant even much more than our highest schools had ever taught.

THE MASS

My attention was first called to this by watching the effect produced by the celebration of the Mass in a Roman Catholic church in a little village in Sicily. Those who know that most beautiful of islands will understand that one does not meet with the Roman Catholic Church there in its most intellectual form, and neither the priest nor the people could be described as especially highly developed; yet the quite ordinary celebration of the Mass was a magnificent display of the application of occult force.

At the moment of consecration the Host glowed with the most dazzling brightness; it became in fact a veritable sun to the eye of the clairvoyant, and as the priest lifted it above the heads of the people I noticed that two distinct varieties of spiritual force poured forth from it, which might perhaps be taken as roughly

corresponding to the light of the sun and the streamers of his corona. The first rayed out impartially in all directions upon all the people in the church; indeed, it penetrated the walls of the church as though they were not there, and influenced a considerable section of the surrounding country.

This force was of the nature of a strong stimulus, and its action was strongest of all in the intuitional world, though it was also exceedingly powerful in the three higher subdivisions of the mental world. Its activity was marked in the first, second and third subdivisions of the astral also, but this was a reflection of the mental, or perhaps an effect produced by sympathetic vibration. Its effect upon the people who came within the range of its influence was proportionate to their development. In a very few cases (where there was some slight intuitional development) it acted as a powerful stimulant, doubling or trebling for a time the amount of activity in those intuitional bodies and the radiance which they were capable of emitting. But forasmuch as in most people the intuitional matter was as yet almost entirely dormant, its chief effect was produced upon the causal bodies of the inhabitants.

Most of them, again, were awake and partially responsive only as far as the matter of the third subdivision of the mental world was concerned, and therefore they missed much of the advantage that they might have gained if the higher parts of their causal bodies had been in full activity. But at any rate every ego within reach, without exception, received a distinct impetus and a distinct benefit from that act of consecration, little though he knew or recked of what was being done.

The astral vibrations also, though much fainter, produced a far-reaching effect, for at least the astral bodies of the Sicilians are usually thoroughly well-developed, so that it is not difficult to stir their emotions. Many people far away from the church, walking along the village street or pursuing their various avocations upon the lonely hillsides, felt for a moment a thrill of affection or devotion, as this great wave of spiritual peace and strength passed over the countryside, though assuredly they never dreamt of connecting it with the Mass which was being celebrated in their little cathedral.

It at once becomes evident that we are here in the présence of a grand and

far-reaching scheme. Clearly one of the great objects, perhaps the principal object, of the daily celebration of the Mass is that everyone within reach of it shall receive at least once each day one of these electric shocks which are so well calculated to promote any growth of which he is capable. Such an outpouring of force brings to each person whatever he has made himself capable of receiving; but even the quite undeveloped and ignorant cannot but be somewhat the better for the passing touch of a noble emotion, while for the few more advanced it means a spiritual uplifting the value of which it would be difficult to exaggerate.

I said that there was a second effect, which I compared to the streamers of the sun's corona. The light which I have just described poured forth impartially upon all, the just and the unjust, the believers and the scoffers. But this second force was called into activity only in response to a strong feeling of devotion on the part of an individual. At the elevation of the Host all members of the congregation duly prostrated themselves—some apparently as a mere matter of habit, but some also with a strong upwelling of deep devotional feeling.

The effect as seen by clairvoyant sight was most striking and profoundly impressive, for to each of these latter there darted from the uplifted[†] Host a ray of fire, which set the higher part of the astral body of the recipient glowing with the most intense ecstasy. Through the astral body, by reason of its close relation with it, the intuitional vehicle was also strongly affected; and although in none of these peasants could it be said to be in any way awakened, its growth within its shell was unquestionably distinctly stimulated, and its capability of instinctively influencing the astral was enhanced. For while the awakened intuition can consciously mould and direct the astral, there is a great storehouse of force in even the most undeveloped intuitional vehicle, and this shines out upon and through the astral body, even though it be unconsciously and automatically.

I was naturally intensely interested in this phenomenon, and I made a point of attending various functions at different churches in order to learn whether what I had seen on this occasion was invariable, or, if it varied, when and under what conditions. I found that at every celebration

the same results were produced, and the two forces which I have tried to describe were always in evidence—the first apparently without any appreciable variation, but the display of the second depending upon the number of really devotional people who formed part of the congregation.

The elevation of the Host immediately after its consecration was not the only occasion upon which this display of force took place. When the benediction was given with the Blessed Sacrament exactly the same thing happened. On several occasions I followed the procession of the Host through the streets, and every time that a halt was made at some half-ruined church and the benediction was given from its steps, precisely the same double phenomenon was produced. I observed that the reserved Host upon the altar of the church was all day long steadily pouring forth the former of the two influences, though not so strongly as at the moment of elevation or benediction. One might say that the light glowed upon the altar without ceasing, but shone forth as a sun at those moments of special effort. The action of the second force, the second ray of light, could also

be evoked from the reserved Sacrament upon the altar, apparently at any time, though it seemed to me somewhat less vivid than the outpouring immediately after the consecration.

Everything connected with the Host—the tabernacle, the monstrance, the altar itself, the priest's vestments, the insulating humeral veil, the chalice and paten—all were strongly charged with this tremendous magnetism, and all were radiating it forth, each in its degree.

A third effect is that which is produced upon the communicant. He who receives into his body a part of that dazzling centre, from which flow the light and the fire, becomes himself for the time a similar centre, and radiates power in his turn. The tremendous waves of force which he has thus drawn into the closest possible association with himself cannot but seriously influence his higher bodies. For the time these waves raise his vibrations into harmony with themselves, thus producing a feeling of intense exaltation. This, however, is a considerable strain upon his various vehicles, which naturally tend gradually to fall back again to their normal rates. For a long time

the indescribably vivid higher influence struggles against this tendency to slow down, but the dead weight of the comparatively enormous mass of the man's own ordinary undulations acts as a drag upon even its tremendous energy, and gradually brings it and themselves down to the common level. But undoubtedly every such experience draws the man just an infinitesimal fraction higher than he was before. He has been for a few moments or even for a few hours in direct contact with the forces of a world far higher than any that he himself can otherwise touch.

Naturally, having watched all this, I then proceeded to make further investigations as to how far this outflowing of force was affected by the character, the knowledge or the intention of the priest. I may sum up briefly the results of the examination of a large number of cases in the form of two or three axioms, which will no doubt at first sight seem surprising to many of my readers.

ORDINATION

First, only those priests who have been lawfully ordained, and have the apostolic

succession, can produce this effect at all. Other men, not being part of this definite organisation, cannot perform this feat, no matter how devoted or good or saintly they may be. Secondly, neither the character of the priest, nor his knowledge, nor ignorance as to what he is really doing, affects the result in any way whatever.

If one thinks of it, neither of these statements ought to seem to us in any way astonishing, since it is obviously a question of being able to perform a certain action, and only those who have passed through a certain ceremony have received the gift of the ability to perform it. Just in the same way, in order to be able to speak to a certain set of people one must know their language, and a man who does not know that language cannot communicate with them, no matter how good and earnest and devoted he may be. Also his ability to communicate with them is not affected by his private character, but only by the one fact that he has, or has not, the power to speak to them which is conferred by a knowledge of their language. I do not for a moment say that these other considerations are without their due effect; I shall speak of

that later, but what I do say is that no one can draw upon this particular reservoir unless he has received the power to do so which comes from a due appointment given according to the direction left by the Christ.

I think that we can see a very good reason why precisely this arrangement has been made. Some plan was needed which should put a splendid outpouring of force within the reach of everyone simultaneously in thousands of churches all over the world. I do not say that it might not be possible for a man of most exceptional power and holiness to call down through the strength of his devotion an amount of higher force commensurate with that obtained through the rites which I have described. But men of such exceptional power are always excessively rare, and it could never at any time of the world's history have been possible to find enough of them simultaneously to fill even one thousandth part of the places where they are needed. But here is a plan whose arrangement is to a certain extent mechanical; it is ordained that a certain act when duly performed shall be the recognised method of bringing

down the force; and this can be done with comparatively little training by any one upon whom the power is conferred. A strong man is needed to pump up water, but any child can turn on a tap. It needs a strong man to make a door and to hang it in its place, but when it is once on its hinges any child can open it.

Having myself been a priest of the Church of England, and knowing how keen are the disputes as to whether that Church really has the apostolic succession or not, I was naturally interested in discovering whether its priests possessed this power. I was much pleased to find that they did, and I suppose we may take that as definitely settling the much-disputed Parker question, and with it the whole controversy as to the authenticity of the Orders of the Church of England. I soon found by examination that ministers of what are commonly called dissenting sects did not possess this power, no matter how good and earnest they might be. Their goodness and earnestness produced plenty of other effects which I shall presently describe; but their efforts did *not* draw upon the particular reservoir to which I have referred.

I was especially interested in the case of one such minister whom I knew personally to be a good and devout man, and also a well-read Theosophist. Here was a man who knew much more about the real meaning of the act of consecration than nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of the priests who constantly perform it; and yet I am bound to admit that his best effort did not produce this particular effect, while the others as unquestionably did. (Once more, of course he produced other things which they did not—of which more anon.) That at first somewhat surprised me, but I soon saw that it could not have been otherwise. Suppose, for example, that a certain sum of money is left by a rich Freemason for distribution among his poorer brethren, the law would never sanction the division of that money among any others than the Freemasons for whom it was intended; and the fact that other poor people outside the Masonic body might be more devout or more deserving would not weigh with it in the slightest degree.

Another point which interested me greatly was the endeavour to discover to what extent, if at all, the intention of the priest

affected the result produced. In the Roman Church I found many priests who went through the ceremony somewhat mechanically, and as a matter of daily duty, without any decided thought on the subject; but whether from ingrained reverence or from long habit they always seemed to recover themselves just before the moment of consecration and to perform that act with a definite intention.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

I turned then to what is called the Low Church division of the Anglican community to see what would happen with them, because I knew that many of them would reject altogether the name of priest, and though they might follow the rubric in performing the act of consecration, their intention in doing it would be exactly the same as that of ministers of various denominations outside the Church. Yet I found that the Low Churchman could and did produce the effect, and that the others outside did not. Hence I infer that the 'intention' which is always said to be required must be no more than the intention to do whatever the Church means, without reference to the

private opinion of the particular priest as to what that meaning is. I have no doubt that many people will think that all this ought to be quite differently arranged, but I can only report faithfully what my investigations have shown me to be the fact.

I must not for a moment be understood as saying that the devotion and earnestness, the knowledge and the good character of the officiant make no difference. They make a great difference; but they do not affect the power to draw from that particular reservoir. When the priest is earnest and devoted, his whole feeling radiates out upon his people and calls forth similar feelings in such of them as are capable of expressing them. Also his devotion calls down its inevitable response, as shown in the illustration in *Thought-Forms*, and the downpouring of force thus evoked benefits his congregation as well as himself; so that a priest who throws his heart and soul into the work which he does may be said to bring a double blessing upon his people, though the second class of influence can scarcely be considered as being of the same order of magnitude as the first. This second outpouring, which is drawn down by devotion

itself, is of course to be found just as often outside the Church as within it.

Another factor to be taken into account is the feeling of the congregation. If their feeling is devout and reverent it is of immense help to their teacher, and it enormously increases the amount of spiritual energy poured down as a response to devotion. The average intellectual level of the congregation is also a matter to be considered, for a man who is intelligent as well as pious has within him a devotion of a higher order than his more ignorant brother, and is therefore able to evoke a fuller response. On the other hand in many places of worship where much is made of the exercise of the intellectual faculties—where for example the sermon and not the service is thought of as the principal feature—there is scarcely any real devotion, but instead of it a horrible spirit of criticism and of spiritual pride which effectually prevents the unfortunate audience from obtaining any good results at all from what they regard as their spiritual exercises.

Devotional feeling or carelessness, belief or scepticism on the part of the congregation makes no difference whatever to the

down-flow from on high when there is a priest in charge who has the requisite qualifications to draw from the appointed reservoir. But naturally these factors make a difference as to the number of rays sent out from the consecrated Host, and so to the general atmosphere of the Church.

THE MUSIC

Another very important factor in the effect produced is the music which is used in the course of the service. Those who have read *Thought-Forms* will remember the striking drawings that are there given of the enormous and splendid mental, astral and etheric erections which are built up by the influence of sound. The general action of sound is a question which I shall take up in another chapter, touching here only upon that side of it which belongs to the services of the Church.

Here is another direction, unsuspected by the majority of those who participate in them, in which these services are capable of producing a wonderful and powerful effect. The devotion of the Church has always centred principally round the offering of the

Mass as an act of the highest and purest adoration possible, and consequently the most exalted efforts of its greatest composers have been in connection with this service also. Here we may see one more example of the wisdom with which the arrangements were originally made, and of the crass ineptitude of those who have so blunderingly endeavoured to improve them.

THE THOUGHT-FORMS

Each of the great services of the Church (and more especially the celebration of the Eucharist) was originally designed to build up a mighty ordered form, expressing and surrounding a central idea—a form which would facilitate and direct the radiation of the influence upon the entire village which was grouped round the church. The idea of the service may be said to be a double one: to receive and distribute the great outpouring of spiritual force, and to gather up the devotion of the people, and offer it before the throne of God.

In the case of the Mass as celebrated by the Roman or the Greek church the different parts of the service are grouped round

the central act of consecration distinctly with a view to the symmetry of the great form produced, as well as to their direct effect upon the worshippers. The alterations made in the English Prayer Book in 1552 were evidently the work of people who were ignorant of this side of the question, for they altogether disturbed that symmetry—which is one reason why it is an eminently desirable thing for the Church of England that it should as speedily as possible so arrange its affairs as to obtain permission to use as an alternative the Mass of King Edward VI. according to the Prayer Book of 1549.

One of the most important effects of the Church service, both upon the immediate congregation and upon the surrounding district, has always been the creation of these beautiful and devotional thought-forms, through which the downpouring of life and strength from higher worlds can more readily take effect. These are better made and their efficiency enhanced when a considerable portion of those who take part in the service do so with intelligent comprehension, yet even when the devotion is ignorant the result is still beautiful and uplifting.

Most of the sects, which unhappily broke away from the Church, entirely lost sight of this inner and more important side of public worship. The idea of the service offered to God almost disappeared, and its place was largely taken by the fanatical preaching of narrow theological dogmas which were always unimportant and frequently ridiculous. Readers have sometimes expressed surprise that those who write from the occult standpoint should seem so decidedly to favour the practices of the Church, rather than those of the various sects whose thought is in many ways more liberal. The reason is shown precisely in this consideration of the inner side of things on which we are now engaged.

The occult student recognises most fully the value of the effort which made liberty of conscience and of thought possible; yet he cannot but see that those who cast aside the splendid old forms and services of the Church lost in that very act almost the whole of the occult side of their religion, and made of it essentially a selfish and limited thing—a question chiefly of ‘personal salvation’ for the individual, instead of the grateful offering of worship to God, which is in

itself the never-failing channel through which the Divine Love is poured forth upon all.

The attainment of mental freedom was a necessary step in the process of human evolution; the clumsy and brutal manner in which it was obtained, and the foolishness of the excesses into which gross ignorance led its champions, are responsible for many of the deplorable results which we see at the present day. The same savage, senseless lust for wanton destruction that moved Cromwell's brutal soldiers to break priceless statues and irreplaceable stained glass has deprived us also of the valuable effect produced in higher worlds by perpetual prayers for the dead, and by the practically-universal devotion of the common people to the saints and angels. Then the great mass of the people was religious—even though ignorantly religious; now it is frankly and even boastfully irreligious. Perhaps this transitory stage is a necessary one, but it can hardly be considered in itself either beautiful or satisfactory.

THE EFFECT OF DEVOTION

No other service has an effect at all comparable to that of the celebration of

the Mass, but the great musical forms may of course appear at any service where music is used. In all the other services (except indeed the Catholic Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament) the thought-forms developed and the general good which is done depend to a great extent upon the devotion of the people. Now devotion, whether individual or collective, varies much in quality. The devotion of the primitive savage, for example, is usually greatly mingled with fear, and the chief idea in his mind in connection with it is to appease a deity who might otherwise prove vindictive. But little better than this is much of the devotion of men who consider themselves civilised, for it is a kind of unholy bargain—the offering to the Deity of a certain amount of devotion if He on His side will extend a certain amount of protection or assistance.

Such devotion, being entirely selfish and grasping in its nature, produces results only in the lower types of astral matter, and exceedingly unpleasant-looking results they are in many cases. The thought-forms which they create are often shaped like grappling-hooks, and their forces move always in closed curves, reacting only upon the man

who sends them forth, and bringing back to him whatever small result they may be able to achieve. The true, pure, unselfish devotion is an outrush of feeling which never returns to the man who gave it forth, but constitutes itself in very truth a cosmic force producing widespread results in higher worlds.

Though the force itself never returns, the man who originates it becomes the centre of a downpour of divine energy which comes in response, and so in his act of devotion he has truly blessed himself, even though at the same time he has also blessed many others as well, and in addition to that has had the unequalled honour of contributing to the mighty reservoir of the Nirmanakaya. Anyone who possesses the book *Thought-Forms* may see in it an attempt to represent the splendid blue spire made by devotion of this type as it rushes upwards, and he will readily understand how it opens a way for a definite outpouring of the divine force of the Solar Deity.

He is pouring forth His wonderful vital energy on every level, in every world, and naturally the outpouring belonging to a higher world is stronger and fuller and less

restricted than that upon the world below. Normally, each wave of this great force acts in its own world alone, and cannot or does not move transversely from one world to another; but it is precisely by means of unselfish thought and feeling, whether it be of devotion or of affection, that a temporary channel is provided through which the force normally belonging to a higher world *may* descend to a lower, and may produce there results which, without it, could never have come to pass.

Every man who is truly unselfish frequently makes himself such a channel, though of course on a comparatively small scale; but the mighty act of devotion of a whole vast congregation, where it is really united, and utterly without thought of self, produces the same result on an enormously greater scale. Sometimes, though rarely, this occult side of religious services may be seen in full activity, and no one who has even once had the privilege of seeing such a splendid manifestation as this can for a moment doubt that the hidden side of a Church service is of an importance infinitely greater than anything purely physical.

Such an one would see the dazzling blue spiral or dome of the highest type of astral

matter rushing upwards into the sky, far above the image of it in stone which sometimes crowns the physical edifice in which the worshippers are gathered; he would see the blinding glory which pours down through it and spreads out like a great flood of living light over all the surrounding region. Naturally, the diameter and the height of the spire of devotion determine the opening made for the descent of the higher life, while the force which expresses itself in the rate at which the devotional energy rushes upwards has its relation to the rate at which the corresponding down-pouring can take place. The sight is indeed a wonderful one, and he who sees it can never doubt again that the unseen influences are more than the seen, nor can he fail to realise that the world which goes on its way heedless of the devotional man, or perhaps even scornful of him, owes to him all the time far more than it knows.

The power of the ordained priest is a reality in other ceremonies than the celebration of the eucharist. The consecration of the water in the rite of baptism, or of the holy water which is to be distributed to the faithful or kept at the entrance of the

church, pours into it a strong influence, which enables it in each case to perform the part assigned to it. The same is true of other consecrations and benedictions which come in the course of the regular work of the priest, though in many of these it seems that a somewhat larger proportion of the effect is produced by the direct magnetism of the priest himself, and the amount of that of course depends upon the energy and earnestness with which he performs his part of the ceremony.

HOLY WATER

We shall find it interesting to study the hidden side of some of these minor services of the Church, and the work done by her priests. Into the making of holy water, for example, the mesmeric element enters very strongly. The priest first takes clean water and clean salt, and then proceeds to demagnetise them, to remove from them any casual exterior influences with which they may have been permeated. Having done this very thoroughly, he then charges them with spiritual power, each separately and with many earnest repetitions, and then finally with further fervent adjurations he casts

the salt into the water in the form of a cross, and the operation is finished.

If this ceremony be properly and carefully performed the water becomes a highly effective talisman for the special purposes for which it is charged—that it shall drive away from the man who uses it all worldly and warring thought, and shall turn him in the direction of purity and devotion. The student of occultism will readily comprehend how this must be so, and when he sees with astral sight the discharge of the higher force which takes place when anyone uses or sprinkles this holy water, he will have no difficulty in realising that it must be a powerful factor in driving away undesirable thought and feeling, and quelling all irregular vibrations of the astral and mental bodies.

In every case where the priest does his work the spiritual force flows through, but he may add greatly to it by the fervour of his own devotion, and the vividness with which he realises what he is doing.

BAPTISM

The sacrament of baptism, as originally administered, had a real and beautiful hidden

side. In those older days the water was magnetised with a special view to the effect of its vibrations upon the higher vehicles, so that all the germs of good qualities in the unformed astral and mental bodies of the child might thereby receive a strong stimulus, while at the same time the germs of evil might be isolated and deadened. The central idea no doubt was to take this early opportunity of fostering the growth of the good germs, in order that their development might precede that of the evil—in order that when at a later period the latter germs begin to bear their fruit, the good might already be so far evolved that the control of the evil would be a comparatively easy matter.

This is one side of the baptismal ceremony; it has also another aspect, as typical of the Initiation towards which it is hoped that the young member of the Church will direct his steps as he grows up. It is a consecration and a setting apart of the new set of vehicles to the true expression of the soul within, and to the service of the Great White Brotherhood; yet it also has its occult side with regard to these new vehicles themselves, and when the ceremony,

is properly and intelligently performed there can be no doubt that its effect is a powerful one.

UNION IS STRENGTH

The economy and efficiency of the whole scheme of the Lord Maitreya depend upon the fact that much greater powers can easily be arranged for a small body of men, who are spiritually prepared to receive them, than could possibly be universally distributed without a waste of energy which could not be contemplated for a moment. In the Hindu scheme, for example, every man is a priest for his own household, and therefore we have to deal with millions of such priests of all possible varieties of temperament, and not in any way specially prepared. The scheme of the ordination of priests gives a certain greater power to a limited number, who have by that very ordination been specially set apart for the work.

Carrying the same principle a little further, a set of still higher powers are given to a still smaller number—the bishops. They are made channels for the force which confers ordination, and for the much smaller

manifestation of the same force which accompanies the rite of confirmation. The hidden side of these ceremonies is always one of great interest to the student of the realities of life. There are many cases now, unfortunately, where all these things are mere matters of form, and though that does not prevent their result, it does minimise it; but where the old forms are used as they were meant to be used, the unseen effect is out of all proportion to anything that is visible in the physical world.

CONSECRATION

To the bishop also is restricted the power of consecrating a church or a church-yard, and the occult side of this is a really pretty sight. It is interesting to watch the growth of the sort of fortification which the officiant builds as he marches round uttering the prescribed prayers and verses; to note the expulsion of any ordinary thought-forms which may happen to have been there; and the substitution for them of the orderly and devotional forms to which henceforth this building is supposed to be dedicated.

THE BELLS

There are many minor consecrations which are of great interest—the blessing of bells, for example. The ringing of bells has a distinct part in the scheme of the Church, which in these days seems but little understood. The modern theory appears to be that they are meant to call people together at the time when the service is about to be performed, and there is no doubt that in the Middle Ages, when there were no clocks or watches, they were put to precisely this use. From this restricted view of the intention of the bell has grown the idea that anything which makes a noise will serve the purpose, and in most towns of England Sunday morning is made into a purgatory by the simultaneous but discordant clanging of a number of unmusical lumps of metal.

At intervals we recognise the true use of the bells, as when we employ them on great festivals or on occasions of public rejoicing; for a peal of musical bells, sounding harmonious notes, is the only thing which was contemplated by the original plan, and these were intended to have a double influence. Some remnant of this still

remains, though but half understood, in the science of campanology, and those who know the delights of the proper performance of a triple-bob-major or a grandsire-bob-cator will perhaps be prepared to hear how singularly perfect and magnificent are the forms which are made by them.

This then was one of the effects which the ordered ringing of the bells was intended to produce. It was to throw out a stream of musical forms repeated over and over again, in precisely the same way, and for precisely the same purpose, as the Christian monk repeats hundreds of *Ave Marias* or the northern Buddhist spends much of his life in reiterating the mystic syllables *Om Mani Padme Hum*, or many a Hindu makes a background to his life by reciting the name Sita Ram.

A particular thought-form and its meaning were in this way impressed over and over again upon all the astral bodies within hearing. The blessing of the bells was intended to add an additional quality to these undulations, of whatever kind they may have been. The ringing of the bells in different order would naturally produce different forms; but whatever the forms may be, they

are produced by the vibration of the same bells, and if these bells are, to begin with, strongly charged with a certain type of magnetism, every form made by them will bear with it something of that influence. It is as though the wind which wafts to us snatches of music should at the same time bear with it a subtle perfume. So the bishop who blesses the bells charges them with much the same intent as he would bless holy water—with the intention that, wherever this sound shall go, all evil thought and feeling shall be banished and harmony and devotion shall prevail—a real exercise of magic, and quite effective when the magician does his work properly.

The sacring bell, which is rung inside the church, at the moment of the reciting of the *Tersanctus* or the elevation of the Host, has a different intention. In the huge cathedrals which mediæval piety erected, it was impossible for all the worshippers to hear what the priest was saying in the recitation of the Mass, even before the present system of what is called ‘recitation in secret’ was adopted. And therefore the server, who is close to the altar and follows the movements of the priest, has it among

his duties to announce in this way to the congregation when these critical points of the service are reached.

The bell which is often rung in Hindu or Buddhist temples has yet another intention. The original thought here was a beautiful and altruistic one. When someone had just uttered an act of devotion or made an offering, there came down in reply to that a certain outpouring of spiritual force. This charged the bell among other objects, and the idea of the man who struck it was that by so doing he would spread abroad, as far as the sound of the bell could reach, the vibration of this higher influence while it was still fresh and strong. Now it is to be feared that the true signification has been so far forgotten that there are actually some who believe it necessary in order to attract the attention of their deity!

INCENSE

The same idea carried out in a different way shows itself to us in the blessing of the incense before it is burned. For the incense has always a dual significance. It ascends

before God as a symbol of the prayers of the people; but also it spreads through the church as a symbol of the sweet savour of the blessing of God, and so once more the priest pours into it a holy influence with the idea that wherever its scent may penetrate, wherever the smallest particle of that which has been blessed may pass, it shall bear with it a feeling of peace and of purity, and shall chase away all in-harmonious thoughts and sensations.

Even apart from the blessing, its influence is good, for it is carefully compounded from gums the undulation-rate of which harmonises perfectly with spiritual and devotional vibrations, but is distinctly hostile to almost all others. The magnetisation may merely intensify its natural characteristics, or may add to it other special oscillations, but in any case its use in connection with religious ceremonies is always good. The scent of sandalwood has many of the same characteristics; and the scent of pure attar of roses, though utterly different in character, has also a good effect.

Another point which is to a large extent new in the scheme prepared by its Founder for the Christian Church is the utilisation

of the enormous force which exists in united synchronous action. In Hindu or Buddhist temples each man comes when he chooses, makes his little offering or utters his few words of prayer and praise, and then retires. Result follows each such effort in proportion to the energy of real feeling put into it, and in this way a fairly constant stream of tiny consequences is achieved; but we never get the massive effect produced by the simultaneous efforts of a congregation of hundreds or thousands of people, or the heart-stirring vibrations which accompany the singing of some well-known processional hymn.

By thus working together at a service we obtain four separate objects. (1) Whatever is the aim of the invocatory part of the service, a large number of people join in asking for it, and so send out a huge thought-form. (2) A correspondingly large amount of force flows in and stimulates the spiritual faculties of the people. (3) The simultaneous effort synchronises the undulations of their bodies, and so makes them more receptive. (4) Their attention being directed to the same object, they work together and thus stimulate one another.

SERVICES FOR THE DEAD

What I have said in the earlier part of this chapter will explain a feature which is often misunderstood by those who ridicule the Church—the offering of a Mass with a certain intention, or on behalf of a certain dead person. The idea is that that person shall benefit by the downpouring of force which comes on that particular occasion, and undoubtedly he does so benefit, for the strong thought about him cannot but attract his attention, and when he is in that way drawn to the church he takes part in the ceremony and enjoys a large share of its result. Even if he is still in a condition of unconsciousness, as sometimes happens to the newly-dead, the exertion of the priest's will (or his earnest prayer, which is the same thing) directs the stream of force towards the person for whom it is intended. Such an effort is a perfectly legitimate act of invocatory magic; unfortunately an entirely illegitimate and evil element is often imported into the transaction by the exaction of a fee for the exercise of this occult power—a thing which is always inadmissible.

OTHER RELIGIONS

I have been trying to expound something of the inner meaning of the ceremonies of the Christian Church—taking that, in the first place because it is with that that I am most familiar, and in the second place because it presents some interesting features which in their present form may be said to be new ideas imported into the scheme of things by our present Bodhisattva. I do not wish it to be supposed that I have expounded the Christian ceremonies because I regard that religion as in any way the best expression of universal truth; the fact that I, who am one of its priests, have publicly proclaimed myself a Buddhist shows clearly that that is not my opinion.

So far as its teaching goes Christianity is probably more defective than any other of the great religions, with perhaps the doubtful exception of Muhammadanism; but that is not because of any neglect on the part of the original Founder to make His system a perfectly arranged exposition of the truth, but because most unfortunately the ignorant majority of the early Christians cast out from among themselves the great

Gnostic Doctors, and thereby left themselves with a sadly mutilated doctrine. The Founder may perhaps have foreseen this failure, for He supplied His Church with a system of magic which would continue to work mechanically, even though His people should forget much of the early meaning of what He had taught them; and it is precisely the force which has lain behind this mechanical working which explains the remarkable hold so long maintained by a Church which intellectually has nothing to give to its followers.

Those who profess other religions must not then suppose that I mean any disrespect to their faiths because I have chosen for exposition that with which I am most familiar. The general principles of the action of ceremonial magic which I have laid down are equally true for all religions, and each must apply them for himself.

THE ORDERS OF CLERGY

Perhaps I ought to explain, for the benefit of our Indian readers, that there are three orders among the Christian clergy—bishops, priests and deacons. When a man

is first ordained he is admitted as a deacon, which means, practically, a kind of apprentice or assistant priest. He has not yet the power to consecrate the sacrament, to bless the people or to forgive their sins; he can however baptise children, but even a layman is permitted to do that in case of emergency. After a year in the diaconate he is eligible for ordination as a priest, and it is this second ordination which confers upon him the power to draw forth the force from the reservoir of which I have spoken. To him is then given the power to consecrate the Host and also various other objects, to bless the people in the name of the Christ, and to pronounce the forgiveness of their sins. In addition to all these powers, the bishop has that of ordaining other priests, and so carrying on the apostolic succession. He alone has the right to administer the rite of confirmation, and to consecrate a church, that is to say, to set it apart for the service of God. These three are the only orders which mean definite grades, separated from one another by ordinations which confer different powers. You may hear many titles applied to the Christian clergy, such

as those of archbishop, archdeacon, dean or canon, but these are only the titles of offices, and involve differences of duty, but not of grade in the sense of spiritual power.

CHAPTER IX

BY SOUNDS

SOUND, COLOUR AND FORM

WE have considered the influences radiating from the walls of our churches, and the effect of the ceremonies performed within them; it still remains for us to mention the hidden side of the music of their services.

There are many people who realise that sound always generates colour—that every note which is played or sung has overtones which produce the effect of light when seen by an eye even slightly clairvoyant. Not every one, however, knows that sounds also build form just as thoughts do. Yet this is nevertheless the case. It was long ago shown that sound gives rise to form in the physical world by singing a certain note into a tube across the end of which

was stretched a membrane upon which fine sand or lycopodium powder had been cast.

In this way it was proved that each sound threw the sand into a certain definite shape, and that the same note always produced the same shape. It is not, however, with forms caused in this way that we are dealing just now, but with those built up in etheric, astral and mental matter, which persist and continue in vigorous action long after the sound itself has died away, so far as physical ears are concerned.

RELIGIOUS MUSIC

Let us take, for example, the hidden side of the performance of a piece of music—say the playing of a voluntary upon a church organ. This has its effect in the physical world upon those of the worshippers who have an ear for music—who have educated themselves to understand and to appreciate it. But many people who do not understand it and have no technical knowledge of the subject are yet conscious of a very decided effect which it produces upon them.

The clairvoyant student is in no way surprised at this, for he sees that each

piece of music as it is performed upon the organ builds up gradually an enormous edifice in etheric, astral and mental matter, extending away above the organ and far through the roof of the church like a kind of castellated mountain-range, all composed of glorious flashing colours coruscating and blazing in a most marvellous manner, like the aurora borealis in the arctic regions. The nature of this differs very much in the case of different composers. An overture by Wagner makes always a magnificent whole with splendid splashes of vivid colour, as though he built with mountains of flame for stones; one of Bach's fugues builds up a mighty ordered form, bold yet precise, rugged but symmetrical, with parallel rivulets of silver or gold or ruby running through it, marking the successive appearances of the *motif*; one of Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* makes a lovely airy erection—a sort of castle of fligree work in frosted silver.

In the book called *Thought-Forms* will be found three illustrations in colour, in which we have endeavoured to depict the forms built by pieces of music by Mendelssohn, Gounod and Wagner respectively, and I

would refer the reader to these, for this is one of the cases in which it is quite impossible to imagine the appearance of the form without actually seeing it or some representation of it. It may some day be possible to issue a book containing studies of a number of such forms, for the purpose of careful examination and comparison. It is evident that the study of such sound-forms would be a science in itself, and one of surpassing interest.

These forms, created by the performers of the music, must not be confounded with the magnificent thought-form which the composer himself made as the expression of his own music in the higher worlds. This is a production worthy of the great mind from which it emanated, and often persists for many years—sometimes even over centuries, if the composer is so far understood and appreciated that his original conception is strengthened by the thoughts of his admirers. In the same manner, though with wide difference of type, magnificent erections are constructed in higher worlds by a great poet's idea of his epic, or a great writer's idea of the subject which he means to put before his readers—such for example, as

Wagner's immortal trilogy of *The Ring*, Dante's grand representation of purgatory and paradise, and Ruskin's conception of what art ought to be and of what he desired to make it.

The forms made by the performance of the music persist for a considerable space of time, varying from one hour to three or four, and all the time they are sending out radiations which assuredly influence for good every soul within a radius of half a mile or more. Not that the soul necessarily knows it, nor that the influence is at all equal in all cases. The sensitive person is greatly uplifted, while the dull and pre-occupied man is but little affected. Still, however unconsciously, each person must be a little the better for coming under such an influence. Naturally the undulations extend much farther than the distance named, but beyond that they grow rapidly weaker, and in a great city they are soon drowned in the rush of swirling currents which fill the astral world in such places. In the quiet country amidst the fields and the trees the edifice lasts proportionately much longer, and its influence has a wider area. Sometimes in such a case those who

can, may see crowds of beautiful nature-spirits admiring the splendid forms built by the music, and bathing with delight in the waves of influence which they send forth. It is surely a beautiful thought that every organist who does his work well, and throws his whole soul into what he plays, is thus doing far more good than he knows, and helping many whom perhaps he never saw and never will know in this life.

Another point which is interesting in this connection is the difference between the edifices built by the same music when rendered upon different instruments—as, for example, the difference in appearance of the form built by a certain piece when played upon a church organ and the same piece executed by an orchestra or by a violin quartette, or played on a piano. In these cases the form is identical if the music be equally well rendered, but the whole texture is different; and naturally, in the case of the violin quartette, the size of the form is far less, because the volume of sound is so much less. The form built by the piano is often somewhat larger than that of the violins, but is not so accurate in detail, and its proportions are less perfect. Again, a decided

difference in texture is visible between the effect of a violin solo and the same solo played upon the flute.

Surrounding and blending with these forms, although perfectly distinct from them, are the forms of thought and feeling produced by human beings under the influence of the music. The size and vividness of these depend upon the appreciativeness of the audience and the extent to which they are affected. Sometimes the form built by the sublime conception of a master of harmony stands alone in its beauty, unattended and unnoticed, because such mental faculties as the congregation may possess are entirely absorbed in millinery or the calculations of the money-market; while on the other hand the chain of simple forms built by the force of some well-known hymn may in some cases be almost hidden by great blue clouds of devotional feeling evoked from the hearts of the singers.

Another factor which determines the appearance of the edifice constructed by a piece of music is the quality of the performance. The thought-form left hanging over a church after the performance of the Hallelujah Chorus infallibly and distinctly

shows, for example, if the bass solo has been flat, or if any of the parts have been noticeably weaker than the others, as in either case there is an obvious failure in the symmetry and clearness of the form. Naturally there are types of music whose forms are anything but lovely, though even these have their interest as objects of study. The curious broken shapes which surround an academy for young ladies at the pupils' practising hour are at least remarkable and instructive, if not beautiful; and the chains thrown out in lasso-like loops and curves by the child who is industriously playing scales or arpeggios are by no means without their charm, when there are no broken or missing links.

SINGING

A song with a chorus constructs a form in which a number of beads are strung at equal distances upon a silver thread of melody, the size of the beads of course depending upon the strength of the chorus, just as the luminosity and beauty of the connecting thread depend upon the voice and expression of the solo singer, while

the form into which the thread is plaited depends upon the character of the melody. Of great interest also are the variations in metallic texture produced by different qualities of voice—the contrast between the soprano and the tenor, the alto and the bass, and again the difference between a boy's voice and a woman's. Very beautiful also is the intertwining of these four threads (quite unlike in colour and in texture) in the singing of a glee or a part-song, or their ordered and yet constantly varied march side by side in the singing of a hymn.

A processional hymn builds a series of rectangular forms drawn with mathematical precision, following one another in definite order like the links of some mighty chain—or still more (unpoetical though it sounds) like the carriages of some huge train belonging to the astral world. Very striking also is the difference in ecclesiastical music, between the broken though glittering fragments of the Anglican chant, and the splendid glowing uniformity of the Gregorian tone. Not unlike the latter is the effect produced by the monotonous chanting of Sanskrit verses by pandits in India.

It may be asked here how far the feeling of the musician himself affects the form which is built by his efforts. His feelings do not, strictly speaking, affect the musical structure at all. If the delicacy and brilliancy of his execution remain the same, it makes no difference to that musical form whether he himself feels happy or miserable, whether his musings are grave or gay. His emotions naturally produce vibrant forms in astral matter, just as do those of his audience, but these merely surround the great shape built by the music, and in no way interfere with it. His comprehension of the music, and the skill of his rendering of it, show themselves in the edifice which he constructs. A poor and merely mechanical performance erects a structure which, though it may be accurate in form, is deficient in colour and luminosity—a form which, as compared with the work of a real musician, gives a curious impression of being constructed of cheap materials. To obtain really grand results the performer must forget all about himself, must lose himself utterly in the music as only a genius may dare to do.

MILITARY MUSIC

The powerful and inspiring effect produced by military music is readily comprehensible to the clairvoyant who is able to see the long stream of rhythmically vibrating forms which is left behind by the band as it marches along at the head of the column. Not only does the regular beat of these undulations tend to strengthen those of the astral bodies of the soldiers, thus training them to move more strongly and in unison, but the very forms which are created themselves radiate strength and courage and martial ardour, so that a body of men which before seemed to be hopelessly disorganised by fatigue, may in this way be pulled together again and endowed with a considerable accession of strength.

It is instructive to watch the mechanism of this change. A man who is utterly exhausted has to a great extent lost the power of co-ordination; the central will can no longer hold together and govern as it should the different parts of the body; every physical cell is complaining—raising its own separate cry of pain and remonstrance; and the effect upon all the vehicles—etheric,

astral and mental—is that a vast number of small separate vortices are set up, each quivering at its own rate, so that all the bodies are losing their cohesion and their power to do their work, to bear their part in the life of the man. Carried to its ultimate extreme this would mean death, but short of that it means utter disorganisation and the loss of the power to make the muscles obey the will. When upon the astral body in this condition there comes the impact of a succession of steady and powerful oscillations, that impact supplies for the time the place of the will-force which has so sorely slackened. The bodies are once more brought into synchronous vibration and are held so by the sweep of the music, thus giving the will-power an opportunity to recover itself and take again the command which it had so nearly abandoned.

So marked and powerful are the waves sent forth by good military music that a sensation of positive pleasure is produced in those who move in obedience to them, just as effective dance-music arouses the desire for synchronous movement in all who hear it. The type of the instruments employed in military bands is also of a nature which

adds greatly to this effect, the strength and sharpness of the vibration being obviously of far greater importance for those purposes than its delicacy or its power to express the finer emotions.

SOUNDS IN NATURE

It is not only the ordered arrangement of sound which we call music which produces definite form. Every sound in nature has its effect, and in some cases these effects are of the most remarkable character. The majestic roll of a thunder-storm creates usually a vast flowing band of colour, while the deafening crash often calls into temporary existence an arrangement of irregular radiations from a centre, suggestive of an exploded bomb; or sometimes a huge irregular sphere with great spikes projecting from it in all directions. The never-ceasing beating of the sea upon the land fringes all earth's coasts with an eternal canopy of wavy yet parallel lines of lovely changing colour, rising into tremendous mountain ranges when the sea is lashed by a storm. The rustling of the wind among the leaves of the forest covers it with a beautiful

iridescent network, ever rising and falling with gentle wave-like movement, like the passing of the wind across a field of wheat.

Sometimes this hovering cloud is pierced by curving lines and loops of light, representing the song of the birds, like fragments of a silver chain cast forth and ringing melodiously in the air. Of these there is an almost infinite variety, from the beautiful golden globes produced by the notes of the campanero, to the amorphous and coarsely-coloured mass which is the result of the scream of a parrot or of a macaw. The roar of the lion may be seen as well as heard by those whose eyes are opened; indeed, it is by no means impossible that some of the wild creatures possess this much of clairvoyance, and that the terrifying effect which is alleged to be produced by this sound may be largely owing to the radiations poured forth from the form to which it gives birth.

IN DOMESTIC LIFE

In more domestic life similar effects are observed; the purring cat surrounds himself

with concentric rosy cloud-films which expand constantly outward until they dissipate, shedding an influence of drowsy contentment and well-being which tends to reproduce itself in the human beings about him. The barking dog, on the other hand, shoots forth well defined sharp-pointed projectiles which strike with a severe shock upon the astral bodies of those in his neighbourhood; and this is the reason of the extreme nervous irritation which this constantly repeated sound often produces in sensitive persons. The sharp spiteful yap of the terrier discharges a series of forms not unlike the modern rifle bullet, which pierce the astral body in various directions, and seriously disturb its economy; while the deep bay of a bloodhound throws off beads like ostrich-eggs or footballs which are slower in motion and far less calculated to injure. Some of these canine missiles pierce like sword-thrusts, while some are duller and heavier, like the blows of a club, and they vary greatly in strength, but all alike are evil in their action upon the mental and astral bodies.

The colour of these projectiles is usually some shade of red or brown, varying with

the emotion of the animal and the key in which his voice is pitched. It is instructive to contrast with these the blunt-ended clumsy shapes produced by the lowing of a cow—forms which have often somewhat the appearance of logs of wood or fragments of a tree-trunk. A flock of sheep frequently surrounds itself with a many-pointed yet amorphous cloud of sound which is by no means unlike the physical dust-cloud which it raises as it moves along. The cooing of a pair of doves throws off a constant succession of graceful curved forms like the letter S reversed.

The tones of the human voice also produce their results—results which often endure long after the sounds which made them have died away. An angry ejaculation throws itself forth like a scarlet spear, and many a woman surrounds herself with an intricate network of hard brown-grey metallic lines by the stream of silly meaningless chatter which she ceaselessly babbles forth. Such a network permits the passage of vibration only at its own low level; it is an almost perfect barrier against the impact of any of the higher and more beautiful thoughts and feelings. A glimpse of the

astral body of a garrulous person is thus a striking object-lesson to the student of occultism, and it teaches him the virtue of speaking only when it is necessary, or when he has something pleasant and useful to say.

Another instructive comparison is that between the forms produced by different kinds of laughter. The happy laughter of a child bubbles forth in rosy curves, making a kind of scalloped balloon shape—an epicycloid of mirth. The ceaseless guffaw of the empty-minded causes an explosive effect in an irregular mass, usually brown or dirty green in colour—according to the predominant tint of the aura from which it emanates. The sneering laugh throws out a shapeless projectile of a dull red colour, usually flecked with brownish green and bristling with thorny-looking points. The constantly repeated cachinnations of the self-conscious create a very unpleasant result, surrounding them with what in appearance and colour resembles the surface of a pool of boiling mud. The nervous giggles of a school-girl often involve her in an unpleasant seaweed-like tangle of lines of brown and dull yellow, while the jolly-hearted

kindly laugh of genuine amusement usually billows out in rounded forms of gold and green. The consequences flowing from the bad habit of whistling are usually decidedly unpleasant. If it be soft and really musical it produces an effect not unlike that of a small flute, but sharper and more metallic; but the ordinary tuneless horror of the London street-boy sends out a series of small and piercing projectiles of dirty brown.

NOISES

An enormous number of artificial noises (most of them transcendently hideous) are constantly being produced all about us, for our so-called civilisation is surely the noisiest with which earth has ever yet been cursed. These also have their unseen side, though it is rarely one which is pleasant to contemplate. The strident screech of a railway engine makes a far more penetrating and powerful projectile than even the barking of a dog; indeed, it is surpassed in horror only by the scream of the steam siren which is sometimes employed to call together the hands at a factory, or by the report of heavy artillery at close quarters.

The railway whistle blows forth a veritable sword, with the added disintegrating power of a serious electrical shock, and its effect upon the astral body which is unfortunate enough to be within its reach is quite comparable to that of a sword-thrust upon the physical body. Fortunately for us, astral matter possesses many of the properties of a fluid, so that the wound heals after a few minutes have passed; but the effect of the shock upon the astral organism disappears by no means so readily.

The flight through the landscape of a train which is not screaming is not wholly unbeautiful, for the heavy parallel lines which are drawn by the sound of its onward rush are as it were embroidered by the intermittent spheres or ovals caused by the puffing of the engine: so that a train seen in the distance crossing the landscape leaves behind it a temporary appearance of a strip of Brobdingnagian ribbon with a scalloped edging.

The discharge of one of the great modern cannons is an explosion of sound just as surely as of gunpowder, and the tremendous radiation of impacts which it throws out to the radius of a mile or so is calculated

to have a very serious effect upon astral currents and astral bodies. The rattle of rifle or pistol fire throws out a sheaf of small needles, which are also eminently undesirable in their effect.

It is abundantly clear that all loud, sharp or sudden sounds should, as far as possible, be avoided by anyone who wishes to keep his astral and mental vehicles in good order. This is one among the many reasons which make the life of the busy city one to be avoided by the occult student, for its perpetual roar means the ceaseless beating of disintegrating vibrations upon each of his vehicles, and this is, of course, quite apart from the even more serious play of sordid passions and emotions which make dwelling in a main street like living beside an open sewer.

No one who watches the effect of these repeated sound-forms upon the sensitive astral body can doubt that there must follow from them a serious permanent result which cannot fail to be to some extent communicated to the physical nerves. So serious and so certain is this, that I believe that if it were possible to obtain accurate statistics on such a point, we should find the length of life much shorter and

the percentage of nervous breakdown and insanity appreciably higher among the inhabitants of a street paved with granite, than among those who have the advantage of asphalt. The value and even the necessity of quiet is by no means sufficiently appreciated in our modern life. Specially do we ignore the disastrous effect upon the plastic astral and mental bodies of children of all this ceaseless unnecessary noise; yet that is largely responsible for evils of many kinds and for weaknesses which show themselves with fatal effect in later life.

There is a yet higher point of view from which all the sounds of nature blend themselves into one mighty tone—that which the Chinese authors have called the KUNG; and this also has its form—an inexpressible compound or synthesis of all forms, vast and changeful as the sea, and yet through it all upholding an average level, just as the sea does, all-penetrating yet all-embracing, the note which represents our earth in the music of the spheres—the form which is our petal when the solar system is regarded from that plane where it is seen all spread out like a lotus.

CHAPTER X

BY PUBLIC OPINION

RACE PREJUDICE

WHEN anything occurs to prevent us from doing or saying exactly what we should like to do, we are in the habit of congratulating ourselves that thought at least is free. But this is only another of the many popular delusions. For the average man thought is by no means free; on the contrary it is conditioned by a large number of powerful limitations. It is bound by the prejudices of the nation, the religion, the class to which he happens to belong, and it is only by a determined and long-continued effort that he can shake himself free from all these influences, and really think for himself.

These restrictions operate on him in two ways; they modify his opinion about facts and about actions. Taking the former first,

he sees nothing as it really is, but only as his fellow-countrymen, his co-religionists, or the members of his caste think it to be. When we come to know more of other races we shake off our preconceptions concerning them. But we have only to look back a century to the time of Napoleon, and we shall at once perceive that no Englishman then could possibly have formed an impartial opinion as to the character of that remarkable man. Public opinion in England had erected him into a kind of bogey; nothing was too terrible or too wicked to be believed of him, and indeed it is doubtful whether the common people really considered him as a human being at all.

The prepossession against everything French was then so strong that to say that a man was a Frenchman was to believe him capable of any villainy; and one cannot but admit that those who had fresh in their minds the unspeakable crimes of the French Revolution had some justification for such an attitude. They were too near to the events to be able to see them in proportion; and because the offscourings of the streets of Paris had contrived to seize upon the government and to steep themselves in

orgies of blood and crime, they thought that these represented the people of France. It is easy to see how far from the truth must have been the conception of the Frenchman in the mind of the average English peasant of that period.

Among our higher classes the century which has passed since then has produced an entire revolution of feeling, and now we cordially admire our neighbours across the Channel, because now we know so much more of them. Yet even now it is not impossible that there may be remote country places in which something of that old and strongly established prejudice still survives. For the leading countries of the world are in reality as yet only partially civilised, and while everywhere the more cultured classes are prepared to receive foreigners politely, the same can hardly be said of the mill-hands or the colliers. And there are still parts of Europe where the Jew is hardly regarded as a human being.

POPULAR PREJUDICE

It needs little argument to show that everywhere among the less cultured people

prejudgments are still strong and utterly unreasonable; but we who think ourselves above them—even we need to be careful, lest unconsciously we allow them to influence us. To stand against a strong popular bias is no easy matter, and the student of occultism will at once see why this is so. The whole atmosphere is full of thought-forms and currents of thought, and these are ceaselessly acting and reacting upon every one of us. The tendency of any thought-form is to reproduce itself. It is charged with a certain rate of vibration, and its nature is to influence every mental and astral body with which it comes into contact in the direction of the same vibration.

There are many matters about which opinion is reasonably equally divided, as (for example) the angle at which one should wear one's hat, or whether one should be a Liberal or a Conservative. Consequently the general average of thought on these matters is no stronger in one direction than in another; and about them and other such matters it may be said that thought is comparatively free. But there are other subjects upon which there is an overwhelming

consensus of public opinion in one direction, and that amounts to so strong a pressure of a certain set of undulations connected with that subject upon the mental body, that unless a man is unusually strong and determined he will be swept into the general current. Even if he is strong enough to resist it, and is upon his guard against it, the pressure is still there, and its action is still continued, and if at any time he relaxes his vigilance for a moment, he may find himself unconsciously warped by it.

I have explained in the second volume of *The Inner Life* that a man who allows himself to contract a prejudice of this kind on any subject causes a hardening of the matter of the mental body in the part of it through which the oscillations relating to that subject would naturally pass. This acts upon him in two ways; first, he is unable to see that subject as it really is, for the vibrations which would otherwise convey an impression of it come against this callosity of the mental body, and either they cannot penetrate it at all, or they are so distorted in their passage through it that they convey no real information. Secondly, the man cannot think truly with regard to that subject,

because the very part of his mental body which he would use in such an effort is already so hardened as to be entirely inefficient, so that the only way to overcome the unfairness is to perform a surgical operation upon that wart in the mental body, and excise it altogether, and to keep for a long time a close watch upon it to see that it is not growing again. If that watch be not kept, the steady pressure of the thought-waves of thousands of other people will reproduce it, and it will be necessary to perform the operation all over again.

POLITICAL PREJUDICE

In many parts of the country there is a vast amount of bitter political bias. The majority of the people in a district hold one view or the other (it matters little which) and they find it difficult to imagine that the members of the opposite party are ordinary human beings at all. They are so sure of their own point of view that they appear to think that everyone else must really hold it also, and that it is only out of malice prepense that their opponents are

pretending to hold an entirely different view. Yet their own ideas are usually not arrived at by any process of thought or of weighing two lines of policy, but are hereditary, precisely as are most men's religious opinions. There is so much excitement and unpleasant feeling connected with politics in almost every country that the wisest course for the student of occultism is to have as little as possible to do with the whole matter. Not that, if he happens to reside in a country where he has a vote, he should refuse to use it, as many good people have done, because of the mass of corruption which sometimes surrounds political activity of the lower kind. If there is much that is evil in connection with such affairs, that is all the more reason why every good citizen should use the power that the system has vested in him (however foolish in itself that system may be) in favour of what seems to him the right and noble course.

GOVERNMENT

The occult theory of government, of the politics of the state, is pre-eminently the common-sense view. The management of a

country is as much a matter of business as the management of a factory or a school. The country has many points of similarity to a great public school. It exists primarily for the benefit of its people, and the people are put there in order to learn. The head of the country makes whatever regulations he considers necessary to secure its efficiency, and there must be discipline and order and prompt obedience to those regulations, or there can be no progress. The King is the headmaster. His work is to exercise sleepless vigilance over the welfare of the school, to employ all methods in his power to make it the best of schools. Our business is not to criticise him, but to obey him, and loyally to give our heartiest co-operation in carrying out whatever he thinks best for the good of the country as a whole. The business of a government is to govern; the business of its people is to be good, loyal, law-abiding citizens so as to make that task of government easy.

A King who thinks of or works for fancied private interests of his own, instead of acting only for his country, is obviously failing to do his work; but remember that any subject who in politics thinks of or

works for supposed private interests of his own, and not for the good of the country as a whole, is also equally failing to do *his* duty as a good citizen. As to the outer form of a government, almost any form can be made to work satisfactorily if the people co-operate loyally and unselfishly, forgetting themselves as units and regarding the country as their unit; but no form of government, however excellent, can be successful and satisfactory if its people are selfish and refractory.

RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE

All that I have said of race prejudice is also true of religious prejudice, which is indeed in many ways even worse than the other. Few men choose their religion; most people are born into a religion, exactly as they are born into a race, and they have no valid reason for preferring it to any other form of faith; but because it happens to be theirs, they arrogantly assume that it must be better than any other, and despise other people whose karma has led them into a slightly different environment. Precisely because this partiality is thus in the

air, and because the ordinary man cannot see the pressure of public opinion, the unfairness steals in upon him unobserved and seems to him quite natural, and indistinguishable from an opinion which he has formed for himself on some reasonable grounds.

It is necessary that we should constantly pull ourselves up, and examine our reasons for the opinions we hold. It is so fatally easy to go with the current and to accept other men's ready-made thoughts, instead of thinking for ourselves. "Almost every one does this, so why should not I?" That is the feeling of the average man, and yet if we would be just to all, as a student of occultism must be—if we seek to know the truth on all subjects, as a student of occultism should know it—then we must at all costs root out these prejudices, and keep a lynx-like watch against their return. We shall find ourselves in many ways differing from the majority, because the opinions of the majority are often unjust, ill-conceived, unreliable; but that after all we must expect, for we are setting before us a high ideal, which as yet does not appeal to that majority. If we think on all points as it thinks, and act in all

ways as it acts, in what way have we raised ourselves above it, and how can we be drawing nearer to our goal?

CLASS PREJUDICE

More insidious still perhaps is the class or caste bias. It is so comforting to feel that we are somehow inherently and generically superior to everybody else—that no good feeling or good action can be expected from the other man, *because* he is a bloated aristocrat or a member of the proletariat, as the case may be. Here again, as with all the other misconceptions, the study of the hidden side of the matter shows us that what is needed is more knowledge and more charity. The occultist sees a prejudice to be a congestion of thought; what is necessary therefore is to stir up the thought, to get to know the people and try to comprehend them, and we shall soon find that fundamentally there is little difference between us and them.

That there are classes of egos, that some are older and some are younger, and that some are consequently more ignorant than others, it is impossible to deny, for that is

a fact in nature, as has been shown by our study of the order in which different divisions of mankind arrived from the moon-chain upon the earth-chain. But there is a common humanity which underlies all the classes, and to this we may always appeal with the certainty of obtaining some response.

Those who feel sure that they belong to the higher class of egos must prove their nobility by great tolerance and charity towards the less fortunate younger members of the human race; *noblesse oblige*, and if they are the nobility they must act accordingly. A prejudice is usually so transparently foolish that when a man has freed himself from it he cannot believe that he ever really felt it, and cannot understand how any of his fellow-creatures who have any pretence to reasoning powers can be subject to it. So there is a certain danger that he himself may become intolerant in turn—intolerant of intolerance. The occultist, however, who sees the mighty combined thought-form and understands the almost irresistible power, and yet the curious insidiousness of its action, understands very well the difficulty of resisting it—the difficulty even of escaping sufficiently from its

thralldom to realise that there is anything to resist.

PUBLIC STANDARDS

Fortunately this almost irresistible pressure of public opinion is not always wrong. In certain directions it is founded not upon the cumulative ignorance of the race but on its cumulative knowledge—on the experience of the generations that have gone before us. Public opinion is undoubtedly in the right when it condemns murder or robbery; and countries in which public opinion has not yet advanced so far as to express itself clearly on these points are universally admitted to be in the rear-guard of civilisation. There are still in the world communities in which law and order are only beginning to exist, and violence is still the deciding factor in all disputes; but those countries are universally recognised as undesirable places of habitation and as lagging behind the progress of the world.

There are other crimes besides robbery and murder which are universally condemned in all civilised countries, and in all these directions the pressure exerted by public

opinion is a pressure in the right direction, tending to restrain those erratic spirits who might otherwise think only of their own desires and not at all of the welfare of the community.

The occultist, seeing so much more of what is really happening, establishes for himself a far more exacting code of morals than does the ordinary man. Many things which the ordinary man would do, and constantly does do, without thinking twice about them, the occultist would not permit himself to do under any consideration, because he sees their effects in other worlds, which are hidden from the less developed man. This is a general rule, though here and there we meet with exceptions in which the occultist, who understands the case, will take steps which the ordinary man would fear to take. This is because his action is based upon knowledge, because he sees what he is doing, while the other man is acting only according to custom.

The great laws of morality are universal, but temporary and local customs are often only ridiculous. There are still many people to whom it is a heinous crime to go for a walk on a Sunday or to play a game

of cards. At such restrictions the occultist smiles, though he is careful not to hurt the feelings of those to whom such quaint and unnatural regulations seem matters of primary importance. In many cases, too, the superior knowledge gained by occult study enables him to see the real meaning of regulations which are misunderstood by others.

CASTE PREJUDICE

A good example of this is to be seen in regard to the caste regulations of India. These were established some ten thousand years ago by the Manu in charge of the fifth root-race, when He had moved down the main stock of that race from Central Asia to the plains of India. This was after the sub-races had been sent out to do their colonising work, and the remnant of the main stock of His race was but small as compared to the teeming millions of Hindustan. Wave after wave of immigration had swept into the country, and mingled freely with the ruling race among its previous inhabitants, and He saw that, unless some definite command was given, the Aryan

type, which had been established with so much trouble, would run great risk of being entirely lost. He therefore issued instructions that a certain division of His people should be made, and that the members of the three great types which He thus set apart should remain as they were; that they should not intermarry with one another or with the subject races.

This was the only restriction that was laid upon them. Yet this very simple and harmless regulation has been expanded into a system of iron rigidity which at the present time interferes at every step and in every direction with the progress of India as a nation. The command not to intermarry has been distorted into an order to hold no fellowship with the members of another caste, not to eat with them, not to accept food from them. Not only that, but the great race divisions made by the Manu have been again divided and subdivided until we are now in the presence of not three castes but a great multitude of sub-castes, all looking down upon one another, all foreign to one another, all restricted from intermarrying or from eating together. And all this in spite of the fact, well-known to all, that

within the written laws of Manu (though they contain much which the Manu himself certainly did not say) it is stated quite definitely that the man of higher caste *may* eat with one of the lowest caste whom he knows to be living in a rational and cleanly manner; and that in the *Mahabharata* caste is declared to depend not upon birth but upon character. For example:

One's own ploughman, an old friend of the family, one's own cow-herd, one's own servant, one's own barber, and whosoever else may come for refuge and offer service—from the hands of all such shudras may food be taken.

(*Manusmriti*, iv. 253.)

After doubt and debate, the Gods decided that the food-gift of the money-lending shudra who was generous of heart was equal in quality to the food-gift of the Shrotriya brahmana who knew all the Vedas, but was small of heart. But the Lord of all creatures came to them and said: Make ye not that equal which is unequal. The food-gift of that shudra is purified by the generous heart, while that of the Shrotriya brahmana is befouled wholly by the lack of good-will.

(*Manusmriti*, iv. 224, 225.)

Not birth, nor sacraments, nor study, nor ancestry, can decide whether a person is twice-born (and to which of the three types of the twice-born he belongs). Character and conduct only can decide.

(*Mahabharata*, Vanaparvan, cccxiii. 108.)

Yet obvious as all this is, and well-known as are the texts to which I have referred, there are yet thousands of otherwise intelligent people to whom the regulations made (*not* by religion but by custom only) are rules as strict as that of any savage with his taboo. All readily agree as to the

absurdity of the taboo imposed in a savage tribe, whose members believe that to touch a certain body or to mention a certain name will bring down upon them the wrath of their deity. Yet all do not realise that the extraordinary taboo which many otherwise sensible Christians erect round one of the days of the week is in every respect as utterly irrational. Nor do our Indian friends realise that they have erected a taboo, exactly similar and quite as unreasonable, about a whole race of their fellow-men, whom they actually label as untouchable, and treat as though they were scarcely human beings at all. Each race or religion is ready enough to ridicule the superstitions of others, and yet fails to comprehend the fact that it has equally foolish superstitions itself.

These very superstitions have done irreparable harm to the cause of religion, for naturally enough those who oppose the religious idea fasten upon these weak points and emphasise and exaggerate them out of all proportion, averring that religion is synonymous with superstition ; whereas the truth is that there is a great body of truth which is common to all the religions, which is

entirely unmarred by superstition, and of the greatest value to the world, as is clearly proved by Mrs. Besant's *Universal Text-Book of Religion and Morals*. This body of teaching is the important part of every religion, and if the professors of all these faiths could be induced to recognise that and—we will not say to abandon their private superstitions, but at least to recognise them as not binding upon any but themselves, there would be no difficulty whatever in arriving at a perfect agreement. Each person has an inalienable right to believe what he chooses, however foolish it may appear to others; but he can under no circumstances have any possible right to endeavour to force his particular delusion upon those others, or to persecute them in any way for declining to accept it.

THE DUTY OF FREEDOM

It therefore becomes the duty of every student of occultism to examine carefully the religious belief of his country and his period, in order that he may decide for himself what of it is based upon reason and what is merely a superstitious accretion.

Most men never make any such effort at discrimination, for they cannot shake themselves free from the influence of the great crowd of thought-forms which constitute public opinion; and because of those they never really see the truth at all, nor even know of its existence, being satisfied to accept instead of it this gigantic thought-form. For the occultist the first necessity is to attain a clear and unprejudiced view of everything—to see it as it is, and not as a number of other people suppose it to be.

In order to secure this clearness of vision, unceasing vigilance is necessary. For the pressure of the great hovering thought-cloud upon us is by no means relaxed because we have once detected and defied its influence. Its pressure is ever present, and quite unconsciously we shall find ourselves yielding to it in all sorts of minor matters, even though we keep ourselves clear from it with regard to the greater points. We were born under its pressure, just as we were born under the pressure of the atmosphere, and we are just as unconscious of one as of the other. As we have never seen anything except through its distorted

medium, we find a great difficulty in learning to see clearly, and even in recognising the truth when we finally come face to face with it; but at least it will gradually help us in our search for truth to know of this hidden side of public opinion, so that we may be on our guard against its constant and insidious pressure.

BUSINESS METHODS

For example, this public opinion is at a very low level with regard to what are called business methods.

In these days of keen competition, things are done and methods are adopted in business that would have astonished our forefathers. Many of these actions and methods are perfectly legitimate, and mean nothing more than the application of shrewder thought and greater cleverness to the work which has to be done; but unquestionably the boundary of what is legitimate and honourable is not infrequently overstepped, and means are employed to which the honest merchant of an earlier age would never have descended.

Indeed, there has come to be a sort of tacit understanding that business has a

morality of its own, and that ordinary standards of integrity are not to be applied to it. A man at the head of a large mercantile house once said to me: "If I tried to do business according to the Golden Rule 'Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you' I should simply starve; I should be bankrupt in a month. The form in which it runs in business matters is much nearer to that immortalised by David Harum, 'Do unto the other man as he would like to do unto you, and *do it first*'." And many others to whom this remark was quoted frankly agreed with him. Men who in all other respects are good and honest and honourable, feel themselves bound in such matters to do as others do. "Business is business," they say, "and the moralist who objects does not know its conditions," and under this excuse they treat one another in business as they would never dream of treating a friend in private life, and make statements which they know to be false, even though outside of their trade they may be truthful men.

All our virtues need widening out so that they will cover a greater area. At

first man is frankly selfish, and takes care only of himself. Then he widens his circle of affection, and loves his family in addition to himself. Later on he extends a modified form of affection to his neighbours and his tribe, so that he will no longer rob them, though he is quite willing to join with them in robbing some other tribe or nation. Even thousands of years ago, if a dispute arose within a family the head of the family would act as arbitrator and settle it. We have now extended this as far as our neighbours or our fellow-citizens in the same State. If we have a dispute with any of them, a magistrate acts as an arbitrator, in the name of the law of the land. But we have not yet reached a sufficient state of civilisation to apply the same idea to national quarrels, though we are just beginning to talk about doing so, and one or two of the most advanced nations have already settled some difficulties in this way.

In the same way the brothers of a family stand together; in dealing with one another they will not take advantage, or state what is untrue; but we have not yet reached the level on which they will be equally honest and open with those outside of the

family, in what they call business. Perhaps if a man meets another in private life or at a friend's house, and enters into conversation with him, he would scorn to tell him a falsehood; yet let the same man enter his shop or place of business, and his ideas of what is honourable or lawful for him at once undergo a sad deterioration.

Undoubtedly, people who manage their affairs along the lines of sharp practice sometimes acquire large fortunes thereby; and those who regard life superficially, envy them for what they consider their success. But those who have accustomed themselves to look a little deeper into the underlying realities, recognise that it is not success at all—that in truth there has been no profit in such a transaction, but a very serious loss.

If man is a soul in process of evolution towards perfection, temporarily stationed here on earth in order to learn certain lessons and to achieve a certain stage of his progress, it is obvious that the only thing that matters is to learn those lessons and to make that progress. If man be in truth, as many of us know he is, a soul that lives for ever, the true interest of

the man is the interest of that soul, not of the body, which is nothing but its temporary vesture; and anything that hinders the progress of that soul is emphatically a bad thing for the man, no matter how advantageous it may appear for his body.

The soul is acting through and advancing by means of his vehicles, and the physical body is only one of these, and that the lowest. Manifestly, therefore, before we are able to pronounce whether any course of action is really good or bad for us, we must know how it affects all of these vehicles, and not only one of them.

Suppose that one man over-reaches another in some transaction, and boasts blatantly of his success and the profit which it has brought him. The student of the inner side of nature will tell him that there has been in reality no gain, but a heavy loss instead. The trickster chinks his money in his hand, and in his shortsightedness triumphantly cries: "See, here is the best of proof; here are the golden sovereigns that I have won; how can you say that I have not gained?"

The occultist will reply that the gold may do him a little good or a little harm,

according to the way in which he uses it; but that a consideration of far greater importance is the effect of the transaction upon higher levels. Let us put aside altogether, for the moment, the injury done to the victim of the fraud—though, since humanity is truly a vast brotherhood, that is a factor by no means to be ignored; but let us restrict ourselves now exclusively to the selfish aspect of the action, and see what harm the dishonest merchant has done to himself.

THE RESULTS OF DECEIT

Two facts stand out prominently to clairvoyant sight. First, the deceiver has had to think out his scheme of imposture; he has made a mental effort, and the result of that effort is a thought-form. Because the thought which gave it birth was guileful and ill-intentioned, that thought-form is one which cramps and sears the mental body, hindering its growth and intensifying its lower vibrations—a disaster in itself far more than counterbalancing anything whatever that could possibly happen in the physical world. But that is not all.

Secondly, this duplicity has set up a habit in the mental body. It is represented therein by a certain type of vibration, and since this vibration has been set strongly in motion it has created a tendency towards its own repetition. Next time the man's thoughts turn towards any commercial transaction, it will be a little easier than before for him to adopt some knavish plan, a little more difficult than before for him to be manly, open and honest. So that this one act of double-dealing may have produced results in the mental body which it will take years of patient striving to eliminate.

Clearly, therefore, even from the most selfish point of view, the speculation has been a bad one; the loss enormously outweighs the gain. This is a certainty—a matter not of sentiment or imagination, but of fact; and it is only because so many are still blind to the wider life, that all men do not at once see this. But even those of us whose sight is not yet open to higher worlds, should be capable of bringing logic and common-sense to bear upon what our seers tell us—sufficiently at least to comprehend that these things must be so, and to take timely warning,

to realise that a transaction may appear to be profitable in one direction and yet be a ruinous loss in another, and that all the factors must be taken into account before the question of profit or loss is decided.

It is clear that a student of the occult who has to engage in business must needs watch closely what are called business methods, lest the pressure of public opinion on this matter should lead him to perform or to condone actions not perfectly straightforward or consistent with true brotherhood.

PREJUDICE AGAINST PERSONS

This applies also in the case of public opinion about a particular person. There is an old proverb which says: "Give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him at once." The truth which it expresses in so homely a manner is a real one, for if the community has a bad opinion of any given person, however utterly unfounded that opinion may be, the thought-form of it exists in the atmosphere of the place, and any stranger who comes will be likely

to be influenced by it. The new-comer, knowing nothing of the victim of evil report, is unlikely to begin his acquaintance with him by charging him with specific crimes; but he may find himself predisposed to think ill of him, without being able to account for it, and may have a tendency to place a sinister interpretation upon the simplest of his actions. If we are trying to follow the truth we must be on our guard against these influences also; we must learn to judge for ourselves in such cases and not to accept a ready-made public judgment, which is just as truly a superstition as though it were connected with religious subjects.

THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS

An influence which often bears a very large part in a man's life is that of his friends. This is recognised in a popular proverb which says that a man may be known by his friends. I take that to mean that the man usually chooses his friends from men of a certain type or a certain class, and that that in turn means that he finds himself in sympathy with the ideas

of that type or that class, and so is likely to reproduce them himself; but it also means much more than this. When a man is with a friend whom he loves, he is in the most receptive attitude. He throws himself open to the influence of his friend, and whatever characteristics are strongly developed in that friend will tend to reproduce themselves in him also.

Even in the physical world the belief of a friend commends itself to us merely because it is his belief. It comes to us with a recommendation which assures for it our most favourable consideration. The hidden side of this is in truth merely an extension of the idea to a higher level. We open ourselves out towards our friends, and in doing so put ourselves in a condition of sympathetic vibration with them. We receive and enfold their thought-waves; whatever is definite in them cannot but impress itself upon our higher bodies, and these undulations come to us enwrapped in those of affection; an appeal is made to our feelings, and therefore to a certain extent our judgment is for the time less alert. On the one side, this may imply a certain danger that an influence may be

accepted without sufficient consideration; on the other hand, it has its advantage in securing for that opinion a thoroughly sympathetic reception and examination. The path of wisdom will be to receive every new opinion as sympathetically as though it came from our best friend, and yet to scrutinise it as carefully as though it had reached us from a hostile source.

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS

It must be remembered that superstition is by no means confined to religious matters. Most travelled Englishmen are aware that in certain parts of the Continent there exists a very decided superstition against the admission of fresh air into a room or a railway carriage, even though science teaches us that fresh air is a necessity of life. We know without a shadow of doubt, from scientific teaching, that sunlight destroys many disease germs, and vitalises the atmosphere; so it is impossible to question that it ought to be admitted to our houses as freely as possible, more especially in those unfortunate countries where we see so little of it. Yet instead of accepting

this blessing and exulting in it, many a housewife makes determined efforts to shut it out when it appears, because of a superstition connected with the colours of curtains and carpets. It is not to be denied that sunlight causes certain colours to fade, but the curious lack of proportion of the ignorant mind is shown in the fact that faded colours are regarded as of greater importance than the physical health and cleanliness which the admission of the sunlight brings. Civilisation is gradually spreading, but there are still many towns and villages in which the superstitious following of the customs of our unscientific forefathers prevents the adoption of modern methods of sanitation.

Even among people who think themselves advanced, curious little fragments of primeval superstition still survive. There are still many among us who will not commence a new undertaking on a Friday, nor form one of a party of thirteen. There are many who regard certain days of the week or of the month as fortunate for them and others as unfortunate, and allow their lives to be governed accordingly. I am not prepared to deny that a larger number

of instances than could reasonably be accounted for by coincidence can be adduced to show that certain numbers are always connected in some way with the destiny of certain persons or families. I do not yet fully understand all that is involved in this, but it would be silly to deny the fact because we have not immediately at hand an adequate explanation of it. Those who are interested in pursuing this question further will find some of the instances to which I am referring in the appendix to Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*.

I do not doubt the existence of what are commonly called planetary influences, for I have already explained the hidden side of them; but I say that, while these influences may make it easier or more difficult to do a certain thing on a certain day, there is nothing whatever in any of them, or all of them combined, that can prevent a man of determined will from ordering his life precisely as he thinks best. As has been said, the wise man rules his stars, the fool obeys them. To let oneself become a slave to such influences is to make a superstition of them.

THE FEAR OF GOSSIP

Perhaps the greatest and most disastrous of all the taboos that we erect for ourselves is the fear of what our neighbours will say. There are many men and women who appear to live only in order that they may be talked about; at least that is what one must infer from the way in which they bring everything to this as to a touchstone. The one and only criterion which they apply with regard to any course of action is the impression which it will make upon their neighbours. They never ask themselves, "Is it right or wrong for me to do this?" but "What will Mrs. Jones say if I do this?"

This is perhaps the most terrible form of slavery under which a human being can suffer, and yet to obtain freedom from it it is only necessary to assert it. What other people say can make to us only such difference as we ourselves choose to allow it to make. We have but to realise within ourselves that it does not in the least matter what anybody says, and at once we are perfectly free. This is a lesson which the occultist must learn at an early stage of

his progress. He lives upon a higher level, and he can allow himself to be influenced only by higher considerations. He takes into account the hidden side of things of which most people know nothing; and, basing his judgment upon that, he decides for himself what is right and what is wrong, and (having decided) he troubles himself no more as to what other people say of him than we trouble ourselves as to the flies that circle round our heads. It never matters in the least to us what any one else says, but it matters much to us what we ourselves say.

A BETTER ASPECT

Happily this mighty power of thought can be used for good as well as for evil, and, in some ways, the pressure of public opinion is occasionally on the side of truth and righteousness. Public opinion, after all, represents the opinion of the majority, and therefore the pressure which it exercises is all to the good when it is applied to those who are below the level of the majority. It is indeed only the existence of this mass of opinion which renders social and civilised

life possible; otherwise we should be at the mercy of the strongest and the most unscrupulous among us. But the student of occultism is trying to raise himself to a level much *above* the majority, and for that purpose it is necessary that he should learn to think for himself, and not to accept ready-made opinions without examining them. This much at least may be said—that, if public opinion does not yet exact a very high level of conduct, at least the public ideal is a high one, and it never fails to respond to the noble and the heroic when that is put before it. Class feeling and *esprit de corps* do harm when they lead men to despise others; but they do good when they establish a standard below which the man feels that he cannot fall.

In England we have a way of attributing our morals to our religion, whereas the truth seems to be that there is little real connection between them. It must be admitted that large numbers of the cultured classes in almost any European country have no real effective belief in religion at all. Perhaps to a certain extent they take a few general dogmas for granted, because

they have never really thought about them or weighed them in their minds, but it would be an error to suppose that religious considerations direct their actions or bear any large part in their life.

They are, however, greatly influenced, and influenced always for good, by another body of ideas which is equally intangible—the sense of honour. The gentleman in every race has a code of honour of his own; there are certain things which he must not do, which he cannot do because he is a gentleman. To do any of those things would lower him in his own estimation, would destroy his feeling of self-respect; but in fact he has never even the temptation to do them, because he regards them as impossible for him. To tell an untruth, to do a mean or dishonourable action, to be disrespectful to a lady; these and such as these, he will tell you, are things which are *not done* in his rank of life. The pressure of such class feeling as this is all to the good, and is by all means to be encouraged. The same thing is to be found in a minor degree in the tradition of our great schools or colleges, and many a boy who has been strongly tempted to

escape from some difficulty by an act of dishonour has said to himself: "I cannot do that, for the sake of the old school; it shall never be said that one of its members descended to such an action." So there is a good side as well as a bad one to this matter of public opinion, and our business is to use always the great virtue of discrimination, so that we may separate the desirable from the undesirable.

Another point worth remembering is that this great clumsy stupid force of public opinion can itself be slowly and gradually moulded and influenced. We ourselves are members of the public, and under the universal law our views must to some extent affect others. The wonderful change, which during the last thirty years has come over modern thought in connection with the subjects which we study, is largely due to the persistent work of our Society. Through all those years we have steadily continued to speak, to write, and above all to think sanely and rationally about these questions. In doing so we have been pouring out vibrations, and their effect is plainly visible in a great modification of the thought of our day. Only those men who are fully

ready can be brought as far as Theosophy, but thousands more may be brought half-way—into New Thought, into Spiritualism, into liberal Christianity. In this case, as in every other, to know the law is to be able to wield its forces.

CHAPTER XI

BY OCCASIONAL EVENTS

A FUNERAL

So far we have been considering chiefly the influences which, whether emanating from nature or from humanity around us, are steadily exercising upon us a fairly constant pressure, of which we are usually ignorant precisely because it is constant. It will now be well to mention the hidden side of such occurrences as come only occasionally into our lives, as, for example, when we attend a funeral, when we undergo a surgical operation, when we attend a lecture, a political meeting, or a spiritualistic sèance, when there is a religious revival in our neighbourhood, when a great national festival is celebrated, or when there is a war, an earthquake, an eruption or some great calamity in the world.

First, then, how is a man affected by the hidden side of a funeral? I do not mean how is a man affected by his own funeral, though that also is a question of interest, for it affects some people to an extraordinary extent. No person of philosophical temperament would trouble himself as to what was done with his body, which is after all only a worn-out garment ; but there are many people in the world who are not philosophical, and to them it is sometimes a matter of great moment.

All classical history assures us that the ancient Greek, when he died, was exceedingly anxious that his body should receive what he considered decent sepulture—mainly because he laboured under the illusion that unless this was done he would not be free to pursue the even tenor of his way after death. Most of the ghost stories of ancient Greece related to people who came back to arrange for the due disposal of their bodies.

The poorer classes among the modern Irish seem to share this extraordinary anxiety about the disposal of their bodies, for on several occasions I have come across Irish women whose one thought after death was not in the least for the welfare or progress

of their souls, but that the number of carriages following their funeral procession should not fall below a certain number, or that the coffin provided for the body should not be in any respect inferior to that which Mrs. So-and-So had had a few weeks before.

This, however, is a mere digression, and what we have to consider is the effect of a funeral upon the survivors, and not upon the dead man (who, nevertheless, is usually present, and regards the proceedings from various points of view, according to his temperament).

A funeral is distinctly a function to be avoided by the occultist; but sometimes he may find himself in circumstances where his refusal to attend might be misconstrued by ignorant and uncomprehending relations. In such a case he should exert his will, and put himself into a determined and positive attitude, so that he may on no account be affected by the influences around him, and at the same time be in a position powerfully to affect others.

He should think first of the dead man (who will most likely be present) with strong friendly interest and affection, and with a determined will for his peace and

advancement. He should adopt also a positive attitude of mind in his thought towards the mourners, endeavouring strongly to impress upon them that they must not grieve, because the man whom they mourn as dead is, in reality, still living, and their grief will hinder him in his new condition. He must try mentally to hold them firmly in hand, and to prevent them from relaxing into hysterics and helplessness.

The modern funeral is far from ideal. It seems to be an established convention that there must be some kind of ceremony connected with the disposal of the discarded clothing of the liberated ego; but surely something better might be devised than what is usually done at present. The funeral in the village church is not without a certain amount of appropriateness—even a certain consolation; the mourners are in a building which has for them holy and elevating associations of all sorts, and the service appointed by the Church of England is beautiful, though here and there one would like to infuse into it a note of more enthusiastic certainty.

But for the service performed in a cemetery chapel there is nothing whatever to be said.

The place is never used for any other purpose than a funeral, and its whole atmosphere is pervaded with hopeless grief. Every thing is usually as bare and as gloomy as possible; the very walls reek of the charnel-house. We must remember that, for one person who understands the truth about death and takes an intelligently hopeful view of it, there are hundreds who have nothing but the most irrational and gruesome ideas. Such a place as that, therefore, is filled with the blackest despair and the most poignant mental suffering; and it is consequently of all places the most undesirable into which to take those who have experienced what seems to them to be a bereavement.

THE DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD BODY

No one who has the faintest glimpse of the hidden side of things can approve of our present barbarous method of disposing of the bodies of the dead. Even on the physical earth there is no single point in its favour, and there are many weighty considerations against it. From the sentimental point of view alone, it is impossible to understand how any person can reconcile

himself to the idea that the cast-off garment of one whom he loves should be left to a slow and loathsome decay under conditions from which imagination shrinks with horror; and when to this we add the dreadful danger of disease to the living from the unspeakable pollution of air and of water, we begin to understand that our funeral customs are one of the many indications that our boasted civilisation is, after all, only a veneer.

Still more decidedly is this impression confirmed when we gain an insight into that side of these matters which is as yet unknown to the majority. We become aware then what kind of entity it is that is attracted by the process of slow putrefaction, and we see that in this way also terrible unnecessary harm is being done to the survivors.

For the dead man, if he is wise, it matters little what becomes of the worn-out garment; but it should be remembered that all dead men are not necessarily wise, and that for some of them (who know no better) this abominable custom of ours makes possible a serious mistake, which under proper conditions could not be committed.

The average man in his ordinary thinking is not in the habit of separating himself into body and soul as definitely as does the student of occultism. True, the dead man has finally left his physical vehicle, and it is practically impossible for him again to take possession of it; but he is intimately acquainted with it, and its rates of vibration are familiar and sympathetic to him. Under all normal and clean and proper conditions he has done with it entirely; but there are those who, having had no ideas, no conceptions of any sort beyond the physical during life, become crazy with fear when they find themselves altogether cut adrift from it. Such men sometimes make frantic efforts to return into some sort of touch with physical life. Most do not succeed; but when any of them do succeed to some limited extent, it can be only by means of their own physical bodies. Such *rapport* as they still retain with the decaying vestures sometimes enables them to draw from them the basis of an imperfect and unnatural half-materialisation—not nearly enough to bring them back into touch with the physical world, but yet sufficient to tear them for the time from healthy astral life.

Such people make for themselves for awhile—fortunately only for awhile—a dim grey world of horror in which they see physical happenings as in a glass darkly—as through a world of mist in which they wander, lost and helpless.

They cannot get back entirely into the dense bodies; a man who did would become a vampire. But they do get hold of the etheric matter of their discarded vehicles, and drag it about with them, and this is the cause of all their suffering; and until they can get rid of this entanglement, until they can plunge through the grayness and get into the light, there can be no rest for them. There are unpleasant forms of black magic, too, known in oriental countries and to those who have studied the methods of the Voodoo or the Obeah, which depend for their success upon the decaying physical body; though this is happily not a consideration of practical importance to those who live among communities unversed in such evil lore.

But at least this is clear—that all possibilities of evil, both for the dead and for the living, are avoided by the rational disposal of the discarded vesture of flesh.

When we return to the custom of cremation, practised by the Hindus, the Greeks and the Romans, we reduce the physical vehicle as rapidly as possible to its constituent elements in a manner which is at once clean, decent, and wholly satisfactory to the æsthetic sentiment as well as to the rational view of the man of sense.

Some people have feared the possibility that, especially in the cases of sudden death, the dead man might feel the flame—might be in some way not yet fully separated from his body, and so might suffer when that body was burned. Even if the death be sudden, so long as it *is* death, the astral and etheric matter have been completely separated from the denser physical, and it would be quite impossible that the dead man could under any circumstances feel what was done to the physical body. I mean that he could not *really* feel it, because the connection through which he feels is definitely broken; what is perhaps possible is that, seeing the cremation, he might have a certain fear lest he should feel it—the idea that he ought to be feeling it, as it were; and so imagination might come into play to some extent.

I have never seen such a case in connection with cremation; but I remember hearing on good authority of a young man whose teeth were all drawn after his death by a dishonest undertaker, in order that they might be sold as artificial teeth. The young man appeared to his father with blood flowing from his mouth, exclaiming in great indignation that they had tortured him by drawing his teeth. The body was exhumed, and it was found that his story was correct. In this case, if the man was really dead, it is quite impossible that he could have felt any pain; but he became aware of what was being done, and was very angry about it; and no doubt he may have thought of himself as really injured, because during life the idea of tooth-drawing had been associated with great pain.

The difference which the knowledge of the hidden side of things makes in the consideration of the whole subject of death is very aptly shown by two of the figures reproduced in the book on *Thought-Forms*—those which illustrate the thought-images created by two men standing side by side at a funeral. There it is seen that the man who had lived in the ordinary blank ignorance with

regard to death, had no thought in connection with it but selfish fear and depression; whereas the man who understood the facts was entirely free from any suggestion of those feelings, for the only sentiments evoked in him were those of sympathy and affection for the mourners, and of devotion and high aspiration.

Indeed, knowledge of the hidden side of life entirely changes a man's attitude towards death, for it shows him instantly that instead of being the end of all things, as is often ignorantly supposed, it is simply the passage from this stage of life to another which is freer and pleasanter than the physical, and that consequently it is to be desired rather than to be feared. He sees at once how utterly a delusion is the theory that those who cast aside their physical bodies are lost to us, for he knows that they remain near us just as before, and that all that we have lost is the power to see them. To the consciousness of the man who possesses even astral sight, the so-called dead are just as definitely present as the so-called living, and since he sees how readily they are affected by the vibrations which we send out to them, he understands how

harmful is the attitude of mourning and grief so often unfortunately adopted by the friends who still retain their physical bodies.

A knowledge of the hidden side of life by no means teaches us to forget our dead, but it makes us exceedingly careful as to how we think of them; it warns us that we must adopt a resolutely unselfish attitude, that we must forget all about ourselves, and the pain of the apparent separation, and think of them neither with grief nor with longing, but always with strong affectionate wishes for their happiness and their progress.

The clairvoyant sees exactly in what manner such wishes affect them, and at once perceives the truth which underlies the teaching of the Catholic Church with regard to the advisability of prayers for the dead. By these both the living and the dead are helped; for the former, instead of being thrown back upon his grief with a hopeless feeling that now he can do nothing, since there is a great gulf between himself and his loved one, is encouraged to turn his affectionate thought into definite action which promotes the happiness and advancement of him who has passed from

his sight in the physical world. Of all this and much more I have written fully in the book called *The Other Side of Death*, so here I will only thus far touch upon the subject, and refer to that volume any who wish for more detailed information.

A SURGICAL OPERATION

In these days of the triumph of surgery it not infrequently happens that a man has to submit himself to an operation. There is less of a hidden side to this than to many other events, because the use of anæsthetics drives the man away from his physical body altogether. But in that very absence much that is of interest to him takes place, and it is well to endeavour to note and remember as far as may be what occurs. This is a difficult thing to do; more difficult than the bringing through of the memory from the astral world, because what is driven out by the anæsthetic is the etheric part of the physical man, and as the etheric double is only a portion of the physical body, and in no sense a perfect vehicle in itself, a man cannot usually bring through a clear memory.

I remember a case of this nature which I was asked by the victim to attend. He was much interested in the occult side of the affair, and anxious to remember all that he could. He was placed upon the operating table, and the anæsthetic was administered. Almost immediately the man sprang out in his astral body, recognised me, and started down the room towards me with an expression of vivid delight upon his face, evidently overjoyed at finding himself fully conscious in the astral world. But in a moment came pouring forth from the physical body a great cloud of etheric matter which was forced out by the anæsthetic. This cloud immediately wrapped itself round him, and I could see the intelligence fade out of his face until it became a mere mask.

When I was permitted to see him again two days afterwards, his memory of what had happened tallied exactly with what I had seen. He remembered the rush out of his body; he recollected clearly seeing me at the other end of the room, and feeling greatly delighted that everything seemed so real. Then he started down the room towards me, but somehow he never arrived, and knew nothing more until he came back

into the body an hour later when the whole operation was over. I felt on that occasion what an advantage the possession of clairvoyance would have been to the two doctors engaged. They gave the patient too much of the anæsthetic, and came within an ace of finally driving out the whole of his etheric double, instead of only part of it as they intended. As my clairvoyant companion forcibly remarked, they left hardly enough of it to cover half-a-crown, and the consequence was that the patient came perilously near to death, and they had to pump oxygen into his lungs for ten minutes in order to bring him back to life at all.

A few years ago a visit to the dentist frequently meant a minor operation, in which the patient passed through a somewhat similar but much shorter experience, owing to the administration of nitrous oxide, and many curious phenomena have shown themselves in connection with that. An example in point will be found in my book on *Dreams* (page 38). In these days of local anæsthetics the dentist is usually able to do his work without the administration of gas, and consequently the experiences

connected with his operation are of a less occult nature.

A LECTURE

We have in a previous chapter considered the consequences which attend upon the action of going to church; let us now consider the inner side of attending a lecture, a political meeting, a spiritualistic séance, or a religious revival.

Of these forms of excitement the lecture is usually the mildest, though even that to some extent depends upon its subject. There is generally much less uniformity about the audience at a lecture than about a congregation in a church. There are often many and rather decisive points of likeness between those who adopt the same religious belief, whereas the people who are interested in a lecture upon some particular subject may come from many different folds, and be of all sorts of quite different types. Still, for the time being there is a link between them, the link of interest in a particular subject; and therefore, however different their minds may be, the same portion of the mind is for the moment being brought into activity in all of

them, and that creates a certain superficial harmony.

Since the Theosophical student frequently has to deliver lectures as well as to endure them, it is perhaps well not entirely to neglect that side of the subject, but to note that, if the lecturer wishes to act effectively upon the mind-bodies of his audience, he must first of all have a clearly defined idea expressing itself through his own mind body. As he thinks earnestly of the different parts of his subject and tries to put them before his people he is making a series of thought-forms—unusually strong thought-forms because of the effort.

He has a fine opportunity, because his audience is necessarily to a great extent in a receptive condition. They have taken the trouble to come in order to hear about this particular subject, and therefore we must suppose that they are in a condition of readiness to hear. If under these favourable conditions he fails to make them understand him, it must be because his own thought upon the subject is not sufficiently clear-cut. A clumsy and indefinite thought-form makes but a slight impression, and even that with much difficulty. A clearly-cut

one forces the mental bodies in the audience to try to reproduce it. Their reflections of it will almost invariably be less definite and less satisfactory than it is, but still, if its edges are sharp enough, they will convey the idea to some extent; but if that from which they have to copy is itself blurred, it is eminently probable that the reproductions will prove entirely unrecognisable.

Sometimes the lecturer receives unexpected assistance. The fact that he is engaged in thinking strongly of one particular subject attracts the attention of disembodied entities who happen to be interested in that subject, and the audience often includes a greater number of people in astral than in physical bodies. Many of these come simply to hear, as do their brothers in the physical world, but sometimes it happens that one of those who are attracted knows more about the subject than the lecturer. In that case he sometimes assists by suggestions or illustrations. These may come to the lecturer in various ways. If he is clairvoyant he may see his assistant, and the new ideas or illustrations will be materialised in subtler matter before him. If he is not

clairvoyant, it will probably be necessary for the helper to impress the ideas upon his brain, and in such a case he may well suppose them to be his own. Sometimes the assistant is not disembodied, or rather only temporarily disembodied; for this is one of the pieces of work frequently taken in hand by the invisible helpers.

In some cases the ego of the lecturer manifests himself in some curious exterior way. For example, I have heard the greatest orator now living say that, while she is speaking one sentence of a lecture, she habitually sees the next sentence actually materialise in the air before her, in three different forms, from which she consciously selects that one which she thinks the best. This must be the work of the ego, though it is a little difficult to see why he takes that method of communication, since after all it is he who is delivering the lecture through the physical organs. At first blush it seems that it would be as easy for him—or perhaps even easier—to select a form himself, and impress only that one upon lower matter; and even then it might as well come directly to the brain as be materialised in the air before it.

Returning from the lecturer to his audience, we may note that it is possible for his hearers to give him great assistance in his work. Older members of a branch have sometimes been heard to say that they did not feel it necessary to go down to the lodge meeting on a certain occasion, as the lecture was about a subject with which they were already thoroughly acquainted. Apart from the large assumption involved in the statement that one can ever be *fully* acquainted with any Theosophical teaching, it is not accurate to say that a man's presence is useless because he knows the subject. Exactly the opposite remark would have much more truth in it; because he knows the subject thoroughly, he also can make strong and clear thought-forms of the different illustrations required, and in that way he can greatly assist the lecturer in impressing on the audience what he wishes to convey to them.

The greater the number of people present at a lecture who thoroughly understand its subject, the easier will it be for all those to whom it is new to obtain a clear conception of it. The lecturer, therefore, is distinctly helped by

the presence of those who can fully comprehend him. He also may be much helped or hindered by the general attitude of his audience. In the main that is usually friendly, since the majority of people who come to a lecture come because they are interested in the subject and wish to learn something about it. Sometimes, however, one or two appear whose main desire is to criticise, and their presence is anything but helpful.

A POLITICAL MEETING

This latter effect is much more in evidence at a political meeting, for there it seems to be the rule that, while some people go for the purpose of supporting the speaker, others go merely for the purpose of challenging and interrupting him. Consequently the feelings to be experienced, and the thought-forms to be seen, at political meetings are not easy to predict before-hand. But one often sees cases in which forms composed entirely or principally of the thoughts of the adherents of one party make huge waves of enthusiasm, which rush over the audience, surround the speaker and work him up into a corresponding condition of enthusiasm.

Many years ago I remember attending a meeting of this description, and being much struck by the effect produced by getting all the people to join together in singing. Some great gun of the party was to speak, and consequently the huge hall was crowded to suffocation a couple of hours before the advertised time; but the organisers of the meeting were wise in their generation, and they employed that time most efficiently by working up that vast heterogeneous crowd into a condition of loyal enthusiasm. All sorts of patriotic songs followed one another in quick succession, and though few really knew the tunes, and still fewer the words, there was at least no lack of enthusiastic good feeling. The two hours of waiting passed like an entertainment, and I think most people were surprised to find how quickly time had fled.

The occult side of the average political meeting, however, is far from attractive, for from the astral world it not unfrequently bears a strong general resemblance to an exceedingly violent thunder-storm. There is often much warring feeling, and even a good deal of personal enmity. On the whole we have usually a preponderance

of a sort of rough and perhaps rather coarse good-humoured jollity, often pierced, however, by spears of anxious feeling from the promoters. Unless duty actually calls one to such gatherings it is generally better to avoid them, for on such occasions there is always a clash of astral currents that cannot but induce great fatigue in anyone who is in the least sensitive.

CROWDS

It is also desirable to avoid as far as possible the mixing of magnetism which comes from too close contact with a promiscuous crowd. Not that we must assume for a moment that the persons composing the crowd are necessarily lower or worse than ourselves. It would be most undesirable that the student should become self-conscious, self-conceited or self-righteous. It is probably true that the aims and objects of the majority of people in any crowd, taken at random, are of more worldly type than those of the Theosophical student; but it would be both wrong and foolish to despise the people on that account. The point to bear in mind is not that we are better

than they, but that there is a difference in the rates of vibration, and that consequently to be in constant contact with others causes disturbance in the various vehicles, which it is better to avoid.

Nevertheless, when duty renders it necessary or desirable that the student should enter a crowd, there are at his disposal various means by which he can protect himself. The most usual is the making of a shell, either etheric, astral or mental; but the best protection of all is a radiant good-will and purity. I shall presently devote a chapter to the consideration of this question of protection.

A SÉANCE

Of all forms of meeting one of the most interesting from the occult point of view is the spiritualistic séance, though of this there are so many different types that hardly anything can be said which would apply equally to all of them—except perhaps that one almost invariable characteristic is an atmosphere of joyousness and hopefulness. The circles to which outsiders are often introduced, those of which we hear most and of which we

may occasionally read in the newspapers—these are after all the few, and behind them, forming the real block of spiritualism, are two other variants of which we hear very little.

There is the ordinary séance, quite among the poor, with a medium probably of the stout washerwoman type, where no sensational phenomena take place, where the spirits are frequently ungrammatical. Thousands of such séances are being held all over the world, and there is a strong family likeness between them. To a visitor their proceedings would appear profoundly uninteresting. Usually the medium gives a kind of fourth-rate ethical address—or perhaps it is really given *through* the medium—but in any case it usually faithfully reproduces all her favourite errors in grammar and in pronunciation. Then as a general rule a few words are said specially to each of the persons present, often taking the form of a description of their surroundings or of the spirits which are supposed to be hovering about them. Such descriptions are usually vague and uncertain to the last degree, but now and again striking identifications are made—far too many to be explicable on any theory of mere

coincidence. And however dull all this may seem to the outsider, it does undoubtedly carry peace and conviction to the members of the circle, and gives them a real living knowledge and certainty with regard to the continued existence of man after death, which puts to shame the faith of the fashionable churches.

The hidden side of a séance such as this has often something pathetic about it. Behind the medium there is usually what is called a spirit-guide—a dead person, sometimes of the medium's own class in life, sometimes of a decidedly higher type—a dead person who has by much patient effort learned how to influence with a reasonable amount of certainty the clumsy organism of the medium, which, however unsuitable it may be in most other respects, at least possesses the invaluable faculty that it *can* be influenced and that communications can in some way or other be got through. The patience with which this entity deals with the poor souls that come to him from both sides of the veil is admirable; for he has to try to bring into harmony not only the tearful inconsequence of scores of sorrowing relations on this side, but also the feverish and

clamorous excitement of a crowd who are trying to rush into manifestation from the other. With his class and in his way such an entity does a great deal of good, and his life of unnoticed toil in some obscure district adds more to the sum total of human happiness than many far more showy efforts which receive greater credit in the eyes of the public. Even such a séance as this, when examined with astral sight, is seen to be a centre of a kind of vortex, the departed rushing in from all directions, desiring either themselves to manifest or to watch the manifestation.

There is another variety of séance of which few know anything—the private family circle to which no outsider is ever admitted. This is infinitely the most satisfactory side of spiritualism, for through it many thousands of families communicate day by day with friends or relations who have passed from the physical world, and in this way not only learn a number of interesting facts but are kept constantly in touch with spiritual subjects and at a high level of thought with regard to them. Most commonly the central figure at these private séances is some departed member of the family, and

the communications ordinarily are affectionate little sermonettes of a devotional character, often somewhat rhapsodical.

Occasionally, however, where the departed relation happens to be a man of original thought or of a scientific turn of mind, a great volume of definite information is gradually gathered together. There are far more of these private revelations in existence than is generally suspected, for hardly one in a hundred of those who receive them is prepared to face an exposure to public ridicule of what to him is above all things a holy thing, in the hope of so improbable a result as the conversion of some sceptical stranger.

At such séances as these, remarkable phenomena are not infrequent, and materialisations of the most startling kind are sometimes part of the daily programme. Often the so-called dead are just as much part of the daily life of the family as the living, as was the case, for example, with the phenomena which took place at the house of Mr. Morell Theobald at Haslemere. The séances described by Mr. Robert Dale Owen are largely of this character, and they represent the highest possible kind of

spiritualism, though in the very nature of the case it is hardly ever available to the ordinary enquirer.

The hidden side of such séances as these is truly magnificent, for they form points of habitual contact between the astral and physical worlds—vortices again, but this time only of the higher and nobler varieties of astral life. The thought-forms surrounding them are of the religious or the scientific type according to the nature of the manifestations, but they are always good thought-forms, calculated to raise the mental or spiritual level of the district in which they are to be found.

Putting aside these two large classes, we have next the smaller group of public séances which to most outsiders represent the whole of spiritualism. All sorts of people are admitted to these, usually on payment of a small sum of money, and the entities who appear on the astral side are just as curious a conglomerate as those who attend on the physical. Here also there is almost always a spirit-guide in charge. The highest astral types are not to be found among the habitués of such seances as these, but there is usually a

sprinkling of dead people who have devoted themselves to the idea of being useful to those still on the physical earth, by the exhibition of phenomena and the giving of various small tests.

The aura of such a séance is usually on the whole somewhat unpleasant, for it attracts a great deal of attention in the astral world as well as in the physical, and consequently round every one of them is always a clamorous crowd of the most undesirable entities, who are restrained only by force from pushing in and seizing upon the medium. Among the dangers attending these séances is the possibility that one of these desperate creatures may seize upon any sensitive sitter and obsess him; worse still, that he may follow him home, and seize upon his wife or daughter. There have been many such cases, and usually it is almost impossible to get rid of an entity which has thus obsessed the body of a living human being.

The hidden side of such a séance is generally a confused net-work of cross-currents, some good and some bad, but none very good and some very bad. The clairvoyant attending such a séance may obtain a certain

amount of instruction from watching the various methods by which the phenomena are produced, which are sometimes exceedingly ingenious. He will be astonished at the cleverness of the personations, and at the amazing facility with which those who know nothing of this side of life can be deceived.

A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

From the point of view of the student of the inner worlds one of the most remarkable phenomena of our day is what is called a religious revival. A religious revival, as seen from the physical world, usually means a gathering of people of the lower classes whose feelings are inflamed by highly emotional and often lurid appeals from some fanatical exponent of the gospel of a particular sect. Day after day these meetings take place, and they are often accompanied by the most extraordinary phenomena of nervous excitement.

People work themselves up into some sort of hysterical condition in which they feel themselves to be saved, as they call it—to have escaped for ever from the bondage of the

ordinary life of the world, and to have become members of a spiritual community whose aims are of the highest description. Often they are moved to confess in public what they consider to have been their misdeeds, and they are apt to do this with a wealth of emotion and repentance entirely out of proportion to anything that they have to confess. The wave of nervous excitement spreads like an infectious disease, and usually it lasts for some weeks, though often towards the end of that time symptoms of universal exhaustion appear and the whole thing somewhat shamefacedly dies down into commonplace life again.

In a small percentage of the cases the spiritual elevation appears to be maintained, and the victims continue to live a life at a distinctly higher level than that which had been theirs previously; but by far the greater number of the cases relapse either suddenly and dramatically, or by slow and gradual stages, into much the same kind of life as they had led before the excitement came. Statistics show that the culmination of this emotional excitement is accompanied by great sexual disturbance, and that the number of illegitimate unions of

all sorts is temporarily greatly increased. There are certain sects which take as part of their regular system a much modified form of this excitement, and consider it necessary for their junior members to pass through a crisis which is sometimes described as 'being convinced of sin,' and in other cases simply as 'getting religion'.

Such a revival as this is seen in its most extravagant form among the negroes of America, among whom it reaches a level of frenzy not commonly attained by the white races. The negroes find it necessary to relieve their feelings by dances and leaps and contortions of the wildest kind, and these are often carried on for hours together, accompanied by yells and groans of a truly alarming character.

That this sort of thing should take place in the twentieth century, and among people who think themselves civilised, is surely a most remarkable phenomenon, and one deserving careful consideration from a student of the inner side of things. For one who possesses astral vision such an outburst is a wonderful but unpleasant sight. The missionary or revivalist preacher who first commences such a movement is

usually animated by the highest motives. He becomes impressed with the overflowing love of God, or with the wickedness of a particular section of the community, and he feels that the spirit moves him to proclaim the one and to rebuke the other. He works himself up into a condition of tremendous emotional excitement, and sets his astral body swinging far beyond the degree of safety.

For a man may yield himself to emotion up to a certain point, and yet recover himself, just as a ship may roll to a certain extent and yet swing back again to her normal position; but just as the ship capsizes if she rolls beyond that point of safety, so if the man lets his astral body entirely escape from control he dies, or becomes insane or is obsessed. Such an obsession need not necessarily be what we should call an evil one, though the truth is that all obsession is evil; but I mean that we need not credit the obsessing entity with anything but good intentions, though he usually takes advantage of such an opportunity more for the sake of the excitement and the feeling which he himself gets out of it than for any altruistic motive.

In many cases, however, the obsessing entity is a departed preacher of the same religion, style and type as the man obsessed, and thus we have temporarily two souls working through one body. The double force thus gained is poured out recklessly upon any audience that can be gathered together. The tremendous swinging energy of these hysterical excesses is contagious, and since such revivals are usually set on foot among people whose emotions are not under the control of a strongly developed intellect, the preacher soon finds others who can be reduced by sympathetic vibration to a condition as unbalanced as his own.

Every one who swings over the safety point adds to the strength of these exaggerated vibrations, and soon an astral disturbance is set up of the nature of a gigantic whirlpool. Towards this from all sides pour astral entities whose one desire is for sensation—no longer merely or even chiefly human beings, but all kinds of nature-spirits who delight in and bathe in the vibrations of wild excitement, just as children play in the surf. It is they who supply and constantly reinforce the energy which is expended with such terrible recklessness. It

is they who try to keep up the level of the excitement, so long as they can find any human beings who can be dragged into the vortex and induced to give them the pleasurable sensations which they desire.

The emotion, remember, is emphatically not of a high type, for it is intensely personal. It is always motivated by an exalted egoism, the desire to save one's own soul; so that the dominant idea is a selfish one. That defines the kind of matter which is set in motion in these tremendous swirlings, and that again limits the nature-spirits who enjoy it to such types as find themselves in tune with that kind of matter. These are naturally by no means the highest types; they are usually creatures without much intelligence or comprehension, understanding nothing about their human victims, and quite unable to save them from the consequences of their mad excitement, even if they could be supposed to care to do so.

This then is the hidden side of such a movement; this is what the clairvoyant sees when he watches one of these most astonishing meetings. He sees a number of human beings who are taken out of themselves, whose higher vehicles are for the time

being no longer their own, but are being used to supply this torrent of energy. All these people are pouring out their emotions in order to make a vast astral whirlpool into which these great nature-spirits throw themselves with intense delight, plunging and flying through it again and again in wild abandonment of utter pleasure. For they can abandon themselves to pleasure with a thoroughness of which the heavier human being knows nothing. Their whole life for the time is one wild paroxysm, and this feeling reacts upon the human beings who unconsciously minister to their pleasures, and gives them also a sensation of intense exultation.

Here we see the explanation of the passional side of these extraordinary displays. All that the nature-spirits desire is intense emotion of one kind or other on the part of their human slaves. It is nothing to them whether that emotion be religious or sexual; probably they do not even know the difference. Certainly they cannot know whether either is helpful or harmful to the evolution of the human beings concerned. The whole thing is a wild mad orgie of non-human entities, precisely the same thing

as the mediæval witches' sabbath, but provoked in this case by an emotion which many consider as belonging to the good side instead of to the evil side of life. But to these nature-spirits all that makes no difference. They know nothing of good or evil; what they enjoy is the tremendous excitement which they can gain only by swaying masses of human beings simultaneously into a condition imminently dangerous to the sanity of their victims. No one man alone could reach so dangerous a level of excitement. There must be a great number reacting upon and, as it were, encouraging and strengthening one another. Indeed, I should advise the student not to attend revival meetings, because, unless he is in good health and well poised, there is definite danger that even he may be swept off his feet.

I wish it to be distinctly understood that in what I have written I am in no way denying the great fact that what is called 'sudden conversion' does sometimes take place, and that the man to whom it happens is ever after the better for it. The word 'conversion' is a noble one, if we can only dissociate it from such

undignified surroundings as those that I have been describing. It means 'to turn along with', and its implication is that the man, who has hitherto been working along his own selfish road, realises for the first time the mighty truth that God has a plan for man, and that it is within his power to adapt himself intelligently to this plan and fulfil the part in it which is destined for him. When he realises this, he turns round and 'goes together with' the divine Will, instead of ignorantly working against it; and after he has once done this, although he may become what the Christians call a backslider, although his vehicles may run away with him and carry him into all sorts of excesses, he can never again sin without feeling remorse—without knowing that he has fallen, and regretting the fall.

This knowledge of the great facts of life is called in the East 'the acquirement of discrimination' or sometimes 'the opening of the doors of the mind'. Usually it is a gradual process, or at least one which comes as the result of continual thought or reasoning. Sometimes, however, the final conviction is borne in upon the man in an instant, and that is a case of what is

called 'sudden conversion'. If the man to whom that instantaneous flash of conviction comes has previously reasoned the thing out with himself (perhaps in other lives) and has almost persuaded himself, so that he needs merely a final touch of illumination to make him quite certain—then the effect of such a conversion is permanent. Not that, even then, the man may not frequently fall back, but he will always recover from such falls, and will on the whole make steady progress.

As has been described, the emotional effect of a great revival meeting is very powerful. Not only will it give the little additional touch which is needed for the 'conversion' of a man who is nearly ready for that process, but it will sometimes seize upon a man who is as yet by no means ready, and it may be powerful enough to swing him over the dividing line, and make him profess himself for the moment (and quite honestly) as heartily converted as the other. But the permanent effect is by no means the same. In this latter case, the man is not really ready; there is a vast amount of force still uncontrolled in the lower part of his nature,

and although that was for the time dominated by the forces present at the revival meeting, when that is over it reasserts itself, and the man inevitably falls back again into his former courses. We must not blame him for that; the strength which is needed for the permanent control of the lower nature grows very slowly, and it would be unreasonable to expect that it can ever be developed in a moment of enthusiasm. The cases in which it appears to be so developed are simply those in which the force has been secretly gathering itself for a long time previously.

Therefore I say again that I do not for a moment deny the occasional reality of sudden conversions; I do not deny that a certain amount of good must follow from all the devotional enthusiasm which is thrown into a religious revival. But I also say that every word that I have written above as to the general effect of such gatherings, and the part taken in them by non-human entities, is absolutely true; and for that reason I cannot but think that such excitement should be avoided by the student of occultism.

In the rare cases where a vast crowd is moved by a dominant idea which is wholly

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In the rare cases where a vast crowd is moved by a dominant idea which is wholly

unselfish, quite a different order of entities comes into play—the astral angels, who have an active delight in good. Under such guidance as theirs, the excessive temporary vibration is safe and even helpful, for these beings understand humanity and know how to bring it back again safely into its ordinary condition.

Some years ago I happened to see a remarkable instance of this which I will presently describe, but I must first say a few words as to the virtue which caused the outburst. For the whole difference is in the motive; in the case previously described it was fundamentally selfish, but in this it was unselfish; in that it was the hope of personal salvation, in this it was loyalty and patriotism.

A WAVE OF PATRIOTISM

Patriotism is a virtue upon which in these days it is very necessary to insist. But we must be sure of what we mean by the term. It is not prejudice, nor is it ill-mannered boasting. There are those who can see no good in any country but their own, who are constantly vaunting with

offensive swagger what they consider its superlative excellencies, and disparaging all others. These are not patriots, but mere braggarts: they exhibit not the strength of their loyalty, but the depth of their ignorance.

True patriotism is the very antithesis of all this; it recognises that each country has its advantages and its disadvantages, that each nation has its excellencies, but also always its deficiencies, since no political or social scheme is yet perfect, and there is a good deal of human nature everywhere. Nevertheless it also sees that just as man owes consideration to the parents who have tended him and to the family of which he finds himself a part, so does he also owe something to the country into which he is born, for that birth is not a matter of chance but of karma. He is put there because these are the surroundings that he has deserved, and they are also those best suited to help onward his evolution. He is put there not to receive only, but to give; for man learns best by service. Thus he should be prepared when called upon to work for his country; he should acquiesce cheerfully in

such measures as may be necessary for the general good, even though they may bring loss to him individually; he should forget for his country's sake his private interests and desires, and when the opportunity arises he should give himself unsparingly to her service.

I am aware that, among students of what is called advanced thought, there are those who sneer at patriotism as a virtue which is half a vice—as an evidence of a low stage of development. But that is a mistaken view: as well might one rail at family affection for exactly the same reasons. Truly both love for family and love for country are more limited than universal love, but they are nevertheless stages on the way to it. If primitive man thinks only for himself, it is an advance for him to extend his love to that wider self which we call the family, and to learn to feel and to think for his nation is but a further step on the same road. Later still he will learn to think and to feel for humanity as a whole, and then he will come to see that the animal and the plant are our brothers, even though they may be younger brothers, and that all life is the divine Life, and so the love which was once

confined to himself, to his family, to his clan, to his nation, has become wide as the shoreless sea of the divine Love.

But a very necessary stage on the way to this goal is that patriotism which leads a man to forego his own ease and comfort, to put aside his private opportunities of gain, nay, to sacrifice his very life, in order to serve his country. Naturally also he personifies his country in the person of her ruler, and so is developed the other virtue of loyalty, and his character is thereby greatly elevated and purified. That individual kings have in the past often been unworthy of this high feeling is a sad fact, but it does not interfere with the other fact of the benefit which accrues to those in whom such feeling is evoked. When it fortunately happens that the sovereign is all that a ruler should be, we have a collocation of circumstances in which loyalty can work with its greatest effect, and splendid results may be achieved both for the King and his people.

A remarkable instance of this was seen in the enthusiasm evoked by the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the late Queen Victoria. For those who could see it, the

inner side of the proceedings of that day was a spectacle never to be forgotten.

It happened that on that occasion I had, through the kindness of a friend, a seat at one of the office-windows in the City on the route of the great procession. Even from the physical point of view, the decorations had transformed the gloomy London streets. The whole of the fronts of the tall houses on both sides of the dingy street were covered with a sort of scaffolding which formed temporary balconies to each of the windows, and all these were closely packed with men, women and children, so that the grim house-fronts were like cliffs lined with faces, rising tier above tier, and the procession wound its way at the foot, as along a gorge whose sides were built of human bodies.

Mostly the people were business men with their wives and families, and country friends; and these latter introduced an element of gaiety and curiosity to which those stern dark City streets are unaccustomed, for as a rule the people gave themselves up to the enjoyment of the occasion, and to the criticising of their neighbours' toilets. The City men themselves were in the

majority of cases unable to shake off their anxieties, and were to be seen still surrounded by thought-forms of prices and percentages. Occasionally a privileged carriage would dash by, or a regiment of soldiers on its way to take part in the pageant; but those rarely claimed more than a moment's attention from these business men, who collapsed almost immediately into their calculations again. Even when at last the great procession itself appeared, their interest in it was but half-hearted, and they saw it against a back-ground of stocks and shares and financial anxiety.

Now and again some specially popular visitor received a little ovation, but on the whole the astral appearance of that huge crowd differed little at that period from that of other similar gatherings. The delight of the children at so unusual a holiday showed itself in many a flash and coruscation of colour, while their fathers' thoughts frequently offered the unfavourable contrast of dark and leaden patches, blots upon the variegated brilliancy of the scene, for they were but little affected by the waves of excitement which were beginning to leap across from side to side of the street. But the vibration of feeling grew

stronger and stronger, and when the splendour of that marvellous pageant culminated in the approach of the Queen herself, a startling change took place, for all the thousands of little local flashes and vortices of colour disappeared utterly, whelmed in the tremendous cataract of mingled blue and rose and violet, which was pouring like a veritable Niagara down both sides of that living valley of faces.

Literally the only comparison possible for it was that smooth resistless rush which is so impressive as one looks up from below at the greatest waterfall of the world, but here it was combined with a wealth of indescribably glorious colour far beyond any conception on the physical plane. No words can give any idea of the effect of that tremendous outburst of simultaneous enthusiasm, that coruscating cascade of love and loyalty and veneration, all converging upon the carriage in which the Royal Lady sat, unrestrainedly weeping in sympathy with the overflowing emotion of her subjects. Yes, and her subjects wept also—wept for pure joy and depth of feeling—and those hard-headed business men forgot their calculations and their anxieties, forgot themselves and their

sordid financial considerations utterly for the time, and were transported into a higher world, lifted clear out of themselves, up to a plane of thought and feeling which many of them had not touched since early days of innocent childhood.

An unique experience, not easily to be had in prosaic times like these, but a most salutary one, which could not but leave a beneficial impression upon everyone who passed through it. That strong soul-shaking was transient, no doubt, yet every heart had for the moment been stirred to its profoundest depths by noble unselfish emotion, and every heart was the better for it.

A similar and even more splendid exhibition of unselfish emotion has taken place recently at the Coronation of His Majesty King George V. I had not myself the privilege of seeing that in the physical body; but an account from those clairvoyants who did see it, shows that it must have surpassed even that other demonstration.

WAR

Another occasional event—happily very occasional and growing rarer and rarer—

which profoundly stirs the hearts of the people, is war. Now I suppose that few at the present day would venture to deny that war is an absurd and atrocious anachronism. If we pause for a moment to think, we all know perfectly well that the result of a battle does not in the least decide the original question at issue. It may show which army has the cleverest general or the greatest weight of artillery; it certainly does *not* show which side is in the right in the quarrel, if there be any right. So far as individuals are concerned all except the very lowest classes have passed beyond the stage of attempting to decide personal disputes by ordeal of battle; when our convictions as to a boundary line differ pronouncedly from our neighbour's, we no longer assemble our servants and try to argue the matter with rifles or bludgeons, but we refer the case instead to a tribunal in whose impartiality we both have reasonable confidence.

As nations, however, we are not yet at the level of evolution which we have reached as individuals; we are willing (some of us) to submit comparatively unimportant matters of dispute to arbitration, but there is as

yet no court in which the races of the world have sufficient trust to accept its decision in a question vital to their existence. So the irrational appeal to brute force still remains as a possibility hovering ever in the background of national life like a menacing thunder-cloud.

Poets have sung of the glories of war, but the legions of the Red Cross, who go forth not to hurt but to help, who come upon the battlefield after the rifle and the cannon have done their work—these can tell us something of the true meaning of war, and of all the ghastly horrors involved in the gallant defence or the successful charge. War may still be sometimes a necessity—the lesser of two evils; but it is so only because our boasted civilisation is still lamentably deficient. Yet, horrible and senseless though it be, it is capable in a certain way of utilisation; it has its part to play at an early stage of evolution.

Unquestionably the egos incarnated in the Zulu hordes, that did not hesitate to march to certain death at the command of Chaka or Cetewayo, acquired in that way qualities of obedience, self-control and self-sacrifice which will be valuable to them

in later births amid surroundings where they can be put to more rational use; and it is to the Zulu level of development that war properly belongs. The same lessons, however, are needed by many who obtain birth in higher races than the Zulu; and without abating one jot of our horror of the ghastly cruelty and senselessness of war, we may yet admit that such devotion to the abstract idea of patriotism as will lead a man to be ready to die for it, means a distinct advance upon the normal attitude of the class from which our common soldiers are chiefly drawn. Those who are closely acquainted with our agricultural population cannot have failed also to observe the difference which military or naval training makes in the young man—how from being slow of speech and comprehension he becomes alert, dexterous, resourceful and self-respecting. Unfortunately he sometimes picks up other and less desirable habits at the same time, but at least he is less bovine and more human.

There is, however, no reason why an excellent system of physical training should not be universally adopted even when peace reigns supreme, so that we might gain all the benefit which is at present derived by

those who are trained in the army and navy, without the sinful and ridiculous waste of life and money in actual warfare. A step in this direction is already being taken by the admirable organisation called the Boy Scouts, and it is fervently to be hoped that this may spread over the whole world, so that its benefits may be shared by all.

Terrible and wicked though it be, war, when it does occur (that is, when it cannot longer be prevented) is always utilised and turned to at least some sort of compensatory good by the Authorities who stand behind. It is sometimes employed also as an alternative to something still worse, or a smaller war is permitted in order to avoid a more disastrous one.

I have been told that if the war which England recently waged in South Africa had not taken place, a colossal and terrible European war would have been inevitable, which would have involved far more widespread destruction. It is also certain that that war was utilised to bind more closely together the different parts of the British Empire, so that in standing side by side upon the battlefield men might learn to

become more brotherly and to understand one another better. Indeed, that is an effect which has often followed upon war, that the factions within a country have agreed to forget their differences in the face of the common enemy. The attack of Italy upon Tripoli may or may not be in the abstract justifiable; but no one who has lived in the country can doubt that it has had its value in bringing the somewhat heterogeneous population of Italy into a closer unity than ever before—into a realisation of its solidarity as a nation.

The hidden side of the actual fighting is perhaps less remarkable than might be expected. The sound-forms produced by the discharge of artillery and by the ceaseless rattling of the rifles are naturally of a striking nature, but as far as the astral world is concerned, a surging mass of confusion is the principal characteristic in the neighbourhood of the battlefield.

There is inevitably a certain amount of fear coming from those who are new to the ghastly work; but there is usually comparatively little of actual hatred. The pain and grief of the wounded are terrible enough, yet even then there is in most cases little of

hatred or personality. There is generally a strong sense of order, obedience, determination, coming perhaps principally from the officers and the older soldiers. But unless the spectator senses the thought-forms of the generals, it is difficult to get any coherent idea of the scene as a whole.

Many invisible helpers are brought together during a battle, to receive the dead and extend to them any assistance of which they may be in need. But, taking it as a whole, there is far more feeling excited about war in the minds of countrymen and relations than in those of the soldiers themselves who actually take part in it.

CATASTROPHES

Sometimes great catastrophes other than war overtake the world. Two hundred thousand people perished suddenly in an earthquake at Messina; what is the occult side of such a happening as that? The inner sight helps us to look more understandingly on such events as this, and while we pity the sufferers no less, we yet avoid the feeling of overwhelming horror and dismay which paralyses many at the

thought of such an occurrence. Let us think calmly, analytically, what really happened in that case. Two hundred thousand people were suddenly released from the burden of the flesh. Surely we have no need to pity *them*. We cannot speak of them as sufferers, for they have been lifted suddenly and painlessly into a higher and happier life, and in such a catastrophe as this there is really less of suffering than in connection with many isolated cases of death.

The suffering caused by sudden death is never to the dead man, but to the relations who, not understanding the facts of death, suppose themselves to have lost him. But precisely in a great catastrophe of this nature, few are left to mourn for the others, since the families within a certain area are almost all destroyed. The direct relations in most cases die together, and those who are left to mourn are more distant relations settled in far-away districts.

Some there were beyond doubt who suffered terribly—men who were wounded and left for days awaiting succour; others who were shut in beneath heaps of ruins and suffocated or starved to death. Towards these indeed our keenest sympathy may well go

forth. Yet remember that they can have been at most but few, a smaller number than those who die of starvation every week in our capital city of London, for starvation is not merely absolute lack of food for a certain number of days. A man who has insufficient food, or bad food containing insufficient nourishment, for a period of years is starving to death quite as surely as the man who for a few days has no food at all, and there is far more prolonged suffering in the former case than in the latter.

But again, it may be said, in the earthquake there was a vast amount of suffering, because many people were rendered homeless, and because they were bereft of their ordinary supplies of food. That again is true, and to those also our heartiest sympathy must be extended. Indeed, we know that the whole world did so extend it, and from the occult view by far the most important effect of that earthquake was the great wave of sympathy and pity which came rolling in upon the place from every part of the habitable globe to which the news had been carried.

It is not death which we should regard as an evil fate; our Theosophical

knowledge has at least taught us that. It is never the dead whom we should pity, but the living who still suffer under all the cramping restrictions of this strange physical plane. For those whose consciousness knows no other world, it seems terrible to have to quit this; a man whose sight ranges over the higher worlds knows with a vivid certainty that nothing can shake, that, if one is to consider happiness alone, the happiest moment for every man is that in which he escapes from this world into the wider and more real life above.

Granted that our life here is a necessity, that we have development to make which can be made only under these hard conditions; it is for that reason that our physical life is necessary, and so we come forth into it as a man goes forth from his home to some unpleasant task which nevertheless he knows must be done. Pity by all means the poor fellow who is exiled from that higher life, but do not waste your sorrow upon those who have gone home again to the glory, the beauty and the rest.

Seen from the physical world everything is distorted, because we see only so tiny a part of it, and then with strange stupidity

insist upon taking that for the whole. Occultism teaches us a finer proportion, and brings our life into perspective for us, and so while we lack nothing of sympathy for all who suffer, we yet learn that those who most need our sympathy are not those upon whom the undiscerning world showers it most freely. All worlds alike are part of the great Solar Deity; in Him "we live and move and have our being," and since we cannot fall away from His presence nor escape His guiding hand what matters all the rest?

CHAPTER XII

BY UNSEEN BEINGS

SENSITIVE PEOPLE

THE occasional events to which we have hitherto referred have been such as might come into the life of almost anyone. There is another class of occasional events which usually come only to a certain type of people; but upon those people they exercise an influence so great that it cannot readily be measured—great enough often to alter the whole current of a life. There are those among us who are more sensitive than the majority of men, who dream dreams and see visions; and to these people their visions are the most important fact of life. Naturally also, such people are attracted to the study of occultism, so that the proportion of them among our readers is likely to be far greater than in the world which cares for none of these things. To these visions

also there is a hidden side, one which it is of great importance to study.

Visions are of many kinds—some trivial and unimportant, others profoundly interesting and productive of far-reaching effects to those who experience them. In some cases their genesis is obvious; in others curious and unexpected associations play their part, and a number of quite separate causes may combine to produce what seems to be a single story.

As I have written several books upon the conditions of the astral world, it not unfrequently happens that persons who have had psychic experiences or visions which they have not fully comprehended send me accounts of them and ask me whether my experience along these lines suggests any explanation. Such letters are not always easy to answer—not that there is usually any difficulty in formulating a hypothesis which will fit the facts, but because there are too many such hypotheses. Almost every experience described might equally easily have been produced in any one of half-a-dozen ways, and without undertaking a special and detailed investigation it is often impossible to say which of these methods was employed in a particular case. Naturally,

but few of the hundreds of cases submitted are of sufficient general interest to warrant such expenditure of time and force; but occasionally one is encountered which is specially characteristic—so good an example of its type that an analysis of it might conceivably be of use to many others to whom similar experiences have come.

A REMARKABLE CASE

Such an one came to me recently from a lady—an account of a long and complicated vision or series of visions, coupled with impressive experiences, which had left behind them a permanent result. In order to understand what had really happened a certain amount of investigation was necessary, in course of which it became evident that several distinct factors had come into play to produce the curious effects described. Each of these factors had to be followed up separately and traced to its source, and I think that students can hardly fail to be interested in an examination of the way in which these independent and disconnected causes worked to bring forth a somewhat startling whole.

I give here an epitome of the story as sent to me, using in many cases the exact words of the narrator, but condensing as much as I can without losing the spirit and style of the original. It should be premised that the lady had become dissatisfied with the religious doctrines of her childhood, and had commenced the study of comparative religion, reading several Theosophical books—among others *The Secret Doctrine*. She was very earnestly desirous to know the truth and to make whatever progress might be possible for her. In the course of her reading she came across Swami Vivekananda's book on *Raja Yoga*, and practised the breathing exercises therein recommended. The result was that she rapidly developed a certain kind of clairvoyance and began to write automatically. For some five days she indulged her astral controls, writing all day long whatever they wished.

It seems that she was strongly opposed to the idea of capital punishment, and had felt great sympathy and pity for a murderer who had recently been executed in her neighbourhood. Among other entities this dead murderer came and communicated, and

brought with him other men of the same stamp. She made the most earnest efforts to help these people, trying in every way to give them hope and comfort and to teach them as much of Theosophy as she knew. She soon found, however, that the murderer dominated and obsessed her, and that she was unable to eject him. Her case became rapidly worse, and her life and reason hung in the balance. For a long time no suggestion, no effort mitigated her sufferings, though she prayed continually with all the power of her soul.

At last one day she became conscious of the presence of another being who brought her relief. He told her that the prayer of her spirit had been recognised, that he had been appointed as her 'guide,' and that because of her spiritual development and the power which she had shown in prayer she was considered especially hopeful and was about to be the recipient of most unusual favours. In fact, he said so much about her remarkable position and the recognition which she had gained that she asked wonderingly :

"Who then am I?"

"You are Buddha," was the startling reply.

“And who are *you*?” she asked.

“I am the Christ,” he answered, “and I will now take charge of you.”

Our correspondent here showed her common-sense and her great superiority over the majority of those who receive such communications by absolutely refusing to believe these astonishing statements, but she nevertheless accepted the guidance (and the teaching upon other points) of the entity who made these astounding claims.

He then told her that she was to pass through an initiation, and that if she succeeded she would be admitted to the ‘council of heaven,’ which had been called together to decide whether the world should now be destroyed, or whether yet another effort for its salvation should be made. He urged her to hasten to qualify herself to attend this meeting while the fate of the world still hung in the balance, so that she might give her voice in favour of salvation. Her attitude of mind was rather curious; she certainly did not accept these extravagant claims, but still she half-believed that there was some great work to be done, and she was willing to continue the experiment and submit herself to the guidance

of the entity who had saved her from obsession.

As a preliminary to the initiation she was directed to have a bed put into a room where she could lock the door, to lie down upon it and make herself comfortable. The guide then instructed her to breathe the yoga breath as taught by Vivekananda. He told her that her previous efforts had raised the serpent-fire to the solar plexus, and that now she must raise it to the brain—a process in which he would help and direct her.

She describes the sensations which followed as exactly resembling the travail of a woman in labour, except that the pain was along the spine, and it seemed that the birth was to take place in the brain. Many times her sufferings were so excruciating that she grew desperate and was about to abandon the struggle, but the guide seemed most anxious and always implored her not to yield, but to carry through the ordeal to the end. He hovered over her like an attendant physician or nurse, encouraging, directing, helping, doing everything that he could to assist the birth. At last she prevailed, and she asserts that the birth appeared to her just as

definite and real a thing as that of one of her own children. When it had taken place the guide was greatly relieved, and exclaimed "Thank God it is over".

This extraordinary experience was, however, only the prelude to a long series of marvellous visions, lasting altogether through twelve days of our physical time. These visions were partly of a directly personal character, and partly of the nature of general instruction—often incoherent and indescribable, yet always interesting and impressive. The personal part consisted of her relation with the so-called 'council of heaven' and the result of her dealings with it, and also included some curious symbolical visions in which persons well-known to her in physical life seemed to play the part of the world which she was trying to save and of the arch-enemy Satan, a fallen angel who resisted her. She pertinently remarks that this was all the more strange since for many years she had quite outgrown any belief in a personal devil or in the necessity of what is ordinarily called 'salvation'.

The general instruction was broadly Theosophical in its character, and referred chiefly to the stages of creation and the evolution

of the various root-races. She describes the first stage of this as follows:

“I then beheld a wonderful vision. At first in the midst of darkness I saw a vast Darkness which seemed to brood and brood for ages. Then a slight movement began, as if it might be the faintest *dream* in this great darkness. Little by little the movement increased, until at last a definite *thought* seemed to evolve. Little by little constantly changing forms appeared. All was chaos. Even the forms were in the midst of chaos, and the travail of the Universe was terrible. All was one. It seemed as if the effort to evolve order and to make of so many forms a unit, demonstrated beyond doubt that all was made by One Great Being, and that the pain and responsibility were felt by Him alone. This continued for a long time, with another expression of birth-giving, with enlarging results and unchanging solemnity.

“I do not know when I first began to see *souls*. It must have been early in the wonderful exhibition; for I remember very distinctly how thickly they lay everywhere in the midst of chaos, and in the midst of forms. In the continual vibration of this

marvellous evolution these souls were swallowed up in forms, which forms again changed to souls. These souls were egg-shaped and of all sizes, from tiny ones to larger ones, but none so large as I saw later in a wonderful sequel.

“After a time the panorama of marvels changed and the world assumed a shape familiar to my mode of thought. Symbol upon symbol passed, including all history and mythology. Thousands of pictures passed in review, as if revealing the whole of Cosmos and of history. I can recall but few now, but one will serve as an illustration.

“I saw a cow of immense proportions,—almost as large as one of our mountains. A ladder was placed against her, and a man crept slowly and laboriously up the ladder, round by round. He represented Humanity. When at last he reached her back, he stretched forward and grasped both her horns. Humanity claimed the products and bounty of the earth for all, not for a few only. My guide called the cow ‘The cow of Demeter.’ My reading of the classics had taught me that Demeter represented the earth.”

It was apparently at this stage that she was introduced to the 'council of heaven'. She found it to consist of a small number of colossal figures seated in a semicircle. The members seemed impatient with the world and determined that it should be destroyed, but she begged most earnestly that another chance should be given to humanity, saying that she had lived and died many times for the world, and was quite ready to devote herself once more to its service. Her guide told her afterwards that she had no idea in the physical world how eloquent she had been in her pleadings on that occasion. There seems to have been some difference of opinion in the council, but eventually the majority yielded to her prayer, and promised to send help to her and to her guide in order that they might work for the world. (An examination into the truth lying behind this remarkable vision of the 'council of heaven' was one of the most interesting features of the investigation of which I shall write later.) After this the semi-theosophical visions were resumed. Once more I quote the words of her letter:

"That night other visions succeeded, but the story of symbology changed. I saw a

valley in which lay the human race, and over it hovered a swarm of beings clad in white, but the whiteness radiated no light. Humanity was dark and shadowed. I rushed to awaken them, but at my approach the white-clad figures rushed into strong, determined and powerful groups to prevent my accomplishing my purpose. I recognised that they were deceiving spirits, self-appointed teachers and preachers of the earth, and that they resolutely beat down and held down the dazed and shadowed humanity. But even as I looked I saw here and there an awakening soul among the human multitude. As this soul awoke it grew luminous as with a light from within, and at the same time it arose from its prone position and began to move about over the sleeping world, trying to arouse others. I seemed to stand on a distant mountain, but could distinctly see whenever a soul began to awaken and to shine, and before the vision passed, many of these radiant lights seemed to burst out here and there, and even a golden light of sun-rays began to gild the tops of the surrounding mountains, and the white-robed figures fled as this golden radiance increased. They, however,

continued to exercise themselves in strenuous endeavours to counteract and oppose my efforts to help the world or to live my life.

“All night the visions continued, but those towards morning are vague. My guide awoke me and told me to get up and get a cup of coffee and to gather myself together, as I was so much in the spirit as to be about to depart from the body altogether. When I had obeyed I found myself dazed. All the time in which I was endeavouring to make a fire and to prepare the cup of coffee, my guide was present and I was conscious of a most wonderful condition. Angels seemed to surround me and to sing hymns of thanksgiving. It was Thanksgiving morning, and the former inclemency of the weather had given place to balminess. I opened the door and turned my face to the southwest. I felt myself surrounded by supernal Beings, and sang with them a wonderful hymn of praise and thanksgiving. It resembled the Assumption of the Virgin-mother, the immaculate conception, the birth and presence of the wonderful Child at once. A peculiarly refreshing but unfamiliar odour

permeated the atmosphere. My guide said that the angels were burning frankincense. Later in the day my guide again told me to go to bed.

“The vision was most wonderful. Again I beheld Creation, but this time it was different. I saw the races in the aggregate. As the races appeared and vanished, my guide said solemnly: ‘And the evening and the morning were the first day,’ ‘And the evening and the morning were the second day,’ etc. Somehow, though I cannot now explain it, although I felt that I understood it at the time, the fifth race was born in the fourth day, and seemed to be of special importance. To that birth my special attention was called, as the full-fledged fifth-race man lay stretched on the hands of a great Being, and was held out to me to observe. In this vision I saw that, up to the fifth race, mankind was of all sorts. Some were large and some were small. Chaos prevailed, and there was little order anywhere in the human universe. But after the birth of the fifth-race man I saw that all had become equal and all worked in perfect harmony. I saw also, at this time, that the race took solid form, like a phalanx—the form, however, being circular—

and that a band was slipped around the whole mass, passing from man to man, and that no man could get outside of that binding band. The passing of the race was marked by the whole human race being suddenly transformed into the soul-form—egg-shaped.

“In the sixth race the development was very marked indeed. The individuals were equal, but much larger than in the fifth race. The tendency of the whole race was much more upward, and the movement had become greatly accelerated. At some time towards the close of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth—I cannot accurately recall just when—I saw sunlight again gilding the peaks. The race emerged from shadow into sunlight, and the onward and upward tendency became swifter and swifter. Then, the hour having once more struck, the eggs lay together just as do the eggs in a nest, but their number was countless.

“My guide left me here. He said he could not go on with me, that I must go on alone and interpret for myself the meaning of my visions. He warned me to be careful not to give up my life; for upon my going through successfully

and not giving up my life would depend my success and the salvation of the world, for which all this that we had seen had been done. In other words, I believed myself to be passing through a terrible ordeal for the salvation of the world.

“As I beheld the development of the seventh race I seemed to go to unimaginable altitudes indeed. The band that I first saw binding the fifth race was strongly encompassing the sixth and seventh races. It became unbreakable. And as I looked into the faces of the men of the seventh race, I saw that gradually they shone more and more brightly with an inner light. Their radiance no longer came from without, but each was a shining, living, dazzling light.

“My body was now very weary, and when evening came I begged for rest. But this was not given. I was put through many trials. Many were terrible, and it required the utmost exertion of my powers to enable me to endure. What was the nature of this I do not know. I know only that I promised to deliver God’s message under any and all conditions, no matter what they might be, if He should require it. But the trials were awful. At one

time I refused the visions, though they were becoming more and more beautiful. They then ceased, and I seemed to find myself in the power of Satan. (All these orthodox terms I personally had long disclaimed, but they became real again in the visions.)

“For a time I believed that as a punishment for my perverseness, or rather as a result of this mistake, I had lost all. The awful crisis had passed. The world was lost as a result of my failure; and now it seemed to be not only *this* world, but the Universe. How I prayed and struggled then! Before all could be restored I promised not only to give up my life but the lives of my children and even the very *life of my soul*, if need be, for the salvation of the world.

“I cannot linger here. Towards morning a wonderful breath came into my body, going up and down the spine as if there were absolutely no physical obstruction in my body, and as it breathed or flowed through me, it sang a wonderful, divine anthem, and ended in a marvellous union, in which I felt myself fully united with God. That was a condition it were folly to attempt to describe.

“During this time I beheld a new series of visions—all of glory. There were no

forms that I can recall, but glory after glory of *colour*, each brighter and grander than the last. At last it was a wonderful violet, and as it shone upon me in unspeakable glory, I was told that I might go on and see God if I would. I asked if from there I might return, and was told that if I went on I could not return. I then said once more, as I had done in a hundred other trials, 'I must live to save the world'. And as I said that and refused to go on, the sun rose in the world, where I was then conscious, and I looked up at my beautiful vision, thinking how dull the sun was, and then gradually the vision faded.

"Just when, I cannot say, but about this time, I was laid on a cross during the night, placed in a sepulchre, and believed my body was dead. My physical heart, as I thought, was arrested, and the pain which I endured was excruciating. But the bliss of my soul in the higher visions was as great as was the pain in the body in the sacrificial trials.

"After this I must desist from any effort at description. I really cannot tell the strange things that befell me, nor are they clear in my memory. One of the ideas

was that I was put through preparation for the work I was to do; another, I seemed to hear, and be a part of, involution as well as evolution. Perhaps it represented the experiences of the soul preparing for incarnation.

“When at last I came out of it all, I found my sorrow-stricken family around my bed. They had thought that I was dying. From the beginning of my abnormal condition to the final close had been twelve days, and for five days and nights I had not slept. On the last day, I had believed myself that after all I was not to live longer in this world, and when I awoke to full and normal consciousness, the voice that I had heard so mysteriously gradually faded away, as did the visions, and neither have appeared to me since.

“But since then I have been conscious of a new spiritual life, and in meditation I reach a blissful condition, and I feel sure that some wonderful thing has happened to me.”

THE VISION INVESTIGATED

It must be understood that the extracts given above are only a small part of the

visions described by our correspondent, but I think that I have given a fair sample of them, and have not omitted any point of special interest.

Any one who is accustomed to analyse psychic phenomena will at once see that there are in the account several features which differentiate it from the average. Many visions, even though quite elaborate and detailed, and intensely realistic to the seer, prove on examination to be entirely self-created. I mean that a man first thinks out a subject himself along certain lines, thereby creating a series of thought-forms; and then he proceeds to pass out of his body in sleep or trance, sees his own thought-forms without recognising them as his, and supposes them to be actualities instead of imperfect reflections. Thus he is strongly confirmed in his particular belief or superstition, whatever it happens to be, because he himself has seen it in a vision which he is sure to regard as celestial. Such a man is of course perfectly honest in his conviction, and even perfectly right in saying that he has seen certain things; the weak point is that he has not the training which would enable him to

distinguish the nature of what he has seen. In the case now before us, however, there are various little touches which are extremely unlikely to have been the thoughts of the seer, and there is considerable evidence that a mind differing much from hers must have been responsible for a great deal of what was seen.

As our correspondent was anxious to understand the genesis of her visions, and as their history gave promise of somewhat unusual features, it seemed worth while to make a definite investigation into the matter.

A *rapport* was therefore obtained with the lady, and it was further found necessary to examine the astral and mental records connected with her, and thus ascertain what had really happened to her. It was soon obvious that many distinct factors entered into the matter, and it was only by patiently disentangling the threads and following each one up to its origin that all the causes could be clearly seen. To put the case briefly :

The lady, as hundreds of other people have done, had got herself into serious trouble by an unwise use of breathing exercises. Her desperate efforts to escape

from the result of these exercises attracted the attention of a dead man who was strong enough to be of some use to her. But this man had objects of his own to gain—objects not consciously selfish, but belonging to a curious personal delusion of his—and as he helped her he realised that he had here what might be a powerful instrument for the furtherance of his plans. He promptly modified his scheme, gave her a prominent part in it, and pushed her on into experiences which without him she would probably not have had for several incarnations yet.

Much of what resulted was evidently not at all what he had expected, though he tried bravely to turn it all to account. Eventually he dropped her, partly because he was alarmed at the turn which matters were taking, and partly because he began to see that he could not use her quite as he had hoped. The outcome of the whole adventure, so far as our correspondent is concerned, has been good, but this is a piece of good fortune for which she cannot be too thankful, since the risks were enormous, and by any ordinary calculations there was scarcely the barest possibility that she would escape

with her life and with reason unimpaired from such an experience.

In order to comprehend all that occurred we must first try to understand what manner of man was this 'guide,' and how he came to be what he was. During physical life he had been a small farmer, a kindly but ignorant man, fanatically religious in a narrow protestant way. His only literature was the Christian bible, over which he pored during the long winter evenings until his whole life became saturated with his conception of its teachings. Needless to say, his conceptions were usually misconceptions, often so grossly material as to be ludicrous, yet the man was so thoroughly in earnest that it was impossible to laugh at him.

He lived in a thinly populated part of the country, and as he found his few neighbours out of sympathy with his religious views he became more and more a recluse as years rolled by, living frugally on the produce of a small part of his farm, and devoting himself with increasing ardour to the study of his one book. This constant brooding over one idea brought him eventually into a condition of religious monomania, in which he

came to believe himself the chosen saviour of the world, the Christ who was destined to offer to it once more the opportunity of salvation which two thousand years ago it had received only very partially. A prominent feature in his scheme was the rescue from its false belief of the vast mass of non-Christian humanity, and his idea was that this should be done not along ordinary missionary lines but through the influence of its own great leaders. It was this part of his programme which induced him to take so keen an interest in our correspondent, as we shall see later.

While still fully possessed by these religious delusions the worthy farmer died. Naturally enough, his astral life was simply a continuation of the physical, raised as it were to a higher power. He soon found himself amidst the crude thought-forms of the golden Jerusalem, a special corner of which he seems to have modelled for himself to suit his idiosyncrasies. The result of his efforts to visualise the descriptions given in the Apocalypse were sometimes really ingenious and original. I noticed specially his image of the four and twenty elders bowing perpetually in adoration before

the throne, and casting at the feet of the deity their golden crowns, which immediately rose from the ground and fluttered back automatically on to their heads, only to be cast down again. His "sea of glass mingled with fire" was not altogether successful, and looked rather like some unusually weird product of a volcanic eruption. His image of the All-Father was quite conventional—a stern-looking old man with a long white beard. In the earlier part of his physical life he had evidently had a thought-image of the Christ—the usual impossible combination of a crucifix and a lamb bearing a flag; but during the later period, when he was persuaded that he himself was the Christ, this figure had not been strengthened, and it was consequently inconspicuous and inactive.

It is among these thought-forms of his that we have to seek for the 'council of heaven' which plays a part in our correspondent's vision, and the constitution of that council proved to be both interesting and instructive. The idea seems originally to have been that the council was a sort of selection of about ten of the more important biblical characters (Elijah, Moses,

Peter, etc.) represented by colossal figures seated in a semicircle on uncomfortable-looking high-backed golden chairs, which, though supposed to be celestial thrones, were manifestly derived from an imperfect recollection of the sedilia in some Gothic cathedral. The deity himself presided over their deliberations.

Originally the members of this council had obviously been nothing but thought-forms; but at the time when our enquiries brought us into contact with them, several of them had been seized and ensouled by living entities, and this ensoulment introduced some new and interesting factors. Two of these entities were dead men, both of them religious people, each working from his own point of view. One of them was a man of German extraction, who during earth-life had been a shoemaker—a simple and uninstructed man not altogether unlike the farmer. He too had studied the bible diligently; he too was a dreamer of vague mystical dreams; he too felt that he had a special revelation or interpretation to offer to the world—something far more rational than the farmer's. He had come to feel that the essential truth of Christianity lay

in the mystical union of Christ and his heavenly bride, the Church. To him the Christ was far less the historical personality of the gospels than the living spirit of the Church, and the task of the true Christian was to awaken within himself the Christ-spirit. The message which humanity needed, he thought, was that every man could and should become a Christ—a message which seemed to him so clear and simple that it needed only to be delivered to command instant attention, and thus to save the world from sin and lift it at once into the light of truth. He had begun preaching to this effect while still on the physical earth, but had died before he had done much towards the conversion of humanity.

Arriving in the astral world, he was still as eager as ever to spread his views, and having met the farmer he struck up a friendship with him. They had much in common, and each felt that the other might be helpful to him in the prosecution of his scheme. The shoemaker did not recognise the farmer as the sole Christ, but he did apply his theory to him, and consider him as a person in whom the Christ-spirit was exceptionally developed. The farmer understood

only vaguely the shoemaker's central idea, but he realised that he had found someone who was willing to co-operate in saving the world. Each regarded the other as somewhat eccentric, but still each with a simple cunning thought that he could make use of the other for his own purposes.

Between them they had conceived this curious idea of a 'council of heaven' of which they were both members; or possibly they may have found a thought-form of this kind made by some one else, and may simply have adopted it and joined themselves to it. The thought-forms as viewed by trained vision were clumsy and imperfect, though no doubt quite satisfactory to their makers. Moses, for example, was seriously incomplete. He sat, stiff and rigid, as though glued to his uncomfortable golden throne, but in reality he was only a face and front projecting from the chair, and had never been properly finished off behind. In this respect he resembled many of the thought-forms found in the Summerland, where it is not infrequent to see mothers fondling children which are defective in exactly the same way. The creators of such forms are always completely happy with them and never

perceive their imperfections, for though there is no life in such dolls except the thought which is put into them, that thought will always respond to its generator, and do exactly what it is expected to do. Peter was another very inefficient person on this council—quite insignificant-looking; but at least he carried a large bunch of keys, the jingling of which was his principal contribution to the deliberations.

While the majority of this council was of the type just described, the thought-forms of the deity, of S. Paul (the image chosen for occupation by the shoemaker) and of the prophet Elijah were much more definite and original. The latter indeed quite surprised us by his activity, and on examination it was found that he, too, was being occupied (or at least used as a kind of mouthpiece) by another dead man, a Welshman, who at some early period in his earth-life had gone through the experience called 'conversion,' and had later on emigrated to America, where he had lived for some years and eventually died. During his physical life he had always been seeking religious experiences of the emotional type; for instance, he had attended some of the negro revival

meetings, and had there witnessed and taken part in the celebrated 'Jerusalem jump'. Intermingled with his religion were curious socialistic proclivities, and his dream was of a golden millennium which was half irrational emotional Christianity and half materialistic Socialism.

He had grasped rather more than the others the relation between the physical and astral worlds, and the possibilities of the latter, and he understood that before he could hope to influence the physical world he must somehow or other get into touch with it. He was not thinking of reincarnation, for he had never heard of such an idea; but he knew that he had passed from the physical world into the astral, and therefore he thought there must be some way of passing back again. His attention was much occupied with this problem, and when he became aware that the farmer had found a medium through whom he could come to some extent into touch with the physical world he decided to make use of both in any way that he could. This seemed a possible first step in the direction of gaining his ends, and it occurred to him to enter the thought-form of Elijah

in the 'council of heaven' as a means of presently introducing himself on such a footing as would at once ensure respect from the others. I do not think he was in any way self-seeking or self-conceited in doing this; it was to him simply a means to an end, providentially put in his way.

But now ensued an unexpected result. Masquerading thus as Elijah, he tried to bear himself as he thought the prophet would have done, and to impart an Old-Testament flavour to his impersonation. This reacted upon his ordinary astral life; he began to live all the while in the character, and by degrees to wonder whether he was not really Elijah! He is literally in process of transforming himself, and will assuredly soon be a confirmed monomaniac. At the time of our investigation he still knew that he was a Welshman who occasionally impersonated Elijah; but I feel certain that in the near future he will pass beyond that stage, and will be as sure that he is really Elijah as the farmer is that he is the Christ.

Meantime he had not yet introduced himself as the Welshman to the other human members of the council, but flattered

himself that as Elijah he was inspiring great respect and in fact directing their decisions. We have, therefore, the astonishing spectacle of a council whose only effective members were three dead men, each one of whom thought that he was manipulating the others for the furtherance of his own objects; and yet none of those objects was selfish, and all the men concerned were religious, well-meaning and honest in intention. Only in the astral world would such an extraordinary combination be possible; yet the most astounding and the most characteristic fact still remains to be told.

It has been already mentioned that the All-Father himself was supposed to preside over the meetings of the council. He was of course a thought-form like all the rest, but he occasionally manifested a spasmodic and inappropriate activity which showed the presence of some exterior force, different in quality from the others. Careful investigation showed that just as the form of Elijah was ensouled by the Welshman, so was this form of the deity ensouled by—a frolicsome nature-spirit!

I have already described some of the characteristics of this delightful kingdom of

Nature. It may be remembered what a keen pleasure some of such creatures take in theatrical performances among themselves, in any sort of masquerade (most especially if thereby they can gain the triumph of deceiving or frightening a member of the superior human evolution), and also how they enjoy telling some enthralling tale to their fellows. Bearing this in mind, we shall at once see that, from the point of view of a tricky nature-spirit, here was an absolutely unique opportunity. He could (and did) play a joke on the most colossal scale conceivable upon three human beings, and we may readily imagine what a soul-satisfying story he had to tell afterwards to his admiring fellows. Needless to say, he had not the faintest idea of irreverence; he would probably be no more capable of such a conception than a fly would; to him the whole thing was nothing but an unequalled opportunity for a really gorgeous hoax, and he did his very best with it.

Of course he could neither understand nor join in the deliberations, so for the most part he preserved a cryptic silence which was very effective. He had somehow acquired a small number of biblical phrases

appropriate to his part, and he emptied these out upon the council at intervals as a parrot might, apparently having no conception of their meaning. "Thus saith the Lord;" "Amen, so be it;" "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other Gods but me;" "I will smite the earth with a curse"—these were some of the gems of his collection, the specimens of his unconscious eloquence. Now and again the joke became too much for him, or perhaps the restraint was irksome, and he abandoned the thought-form for a few moments in order to relieve his overstrained feelings by wild dancing and outbursts of laughter, somewhere out of sight of his council. When this happened it was most interesting to see how the thought-form collapsed from alertness to stolidity, and the unfortunate human members of the council immediately supposed that something had occurred to provoke that divine wrath which is always so prominent a part of this type of religion.

This, then, was the reality behind the awe-inspiring 'council of heaven' before which our correspondent pleaded so earnestly. It will be understood that only the dead men

could really contribute to whatever discussion may have taken place; the other members of the council could not originate anything, though they may have had enough vitality to give a formal assent to a proposition.

To understand the part played in the vision by the Theosophical thought-forms we must glance at the history and mental condition of our correspondent. Falling away from a rather materialistic form of Christianity, she became practically an atheist. Then she lost a beloved child; and in such a nature these various experiences naturally produced deep emotions, each of which had its part in the moulding of her temperament. At this period she came into contact with Theosophy, and commenced its study with no less formidable a book than *The Secret Doctrine*. Undaunted by its difficulties she applied herself to it diligently and strove to grasp its teaching, to make mental pictures of what is described in the Stanzas of Dzyan. Certain of its ideas had a special attraction for her. The thought of initiation with its mysterious and dangerous ordeals was one of them; another was the succession of the races, coupled with the great

question as to who shall and who shall not pass the final test and reach in safety the further shore. All this was inevitably to some extent coloured by earlier Christian conceptions about 'conversion' and 'salvation,' even though at the same time the splendid horizons of the great oriental religions opened before her.

Thus it came about that she surrounded herself with a great mass of strong thought-forms of a more or less Theosophical character, and by the very fact of doing so unconsciously set in motion certain occult laws. In the higher worlds like attracts like, and her thought-forms soon drew to themselves others of similar nature. Some hundreds of miles from where she lived there was an earnest Theosophical Lodge, which among other activities maintained a *Secret Doctrine* class. A vast mass of thought-forms and speculations had been thrown off by this class, and our correspondent was soon in touch with this astral storehouse. How the first contact was made I did not observe. Perhaps when travelling in the astral body our correspondent may have been attracted by the representations of subjects in which she was so deeply

interested; or on the other hand some member of the class may have astrally noticed her thoughts and tried to add to them; or it may have been simply that sympathetic vibrations attracted one another, as they invariably do, without human interference. However that may have been, the fact remains that she was surrounded by an enormous body of thought-forms of a particular type, she herself being at the very same time precisely in the condition to be most deeply affected by them.

At this period she began to practise breathing exercises, and by that means laid herself open to astral influences. Her keen sympathy with suffering caused her to seek the dead murderer, or perhaps brought him to her, and the automatic writing and the obsession followed in the natural course of events. The murderer put forth all his power to maintain the advantage which he had gained, and she struggled desperately to protect and free herself, making herself for the time quite a conspicuous object in the astral world by the vehemence of her efforts and the amount of energy which she put forth.

As the farmer wandered about, the affray attracted his attention, and in his character

as the Christ he felt it his duty to interfere and expel the murderer. He had never before encountered so brilliant an astral body, nor had he seen such impressive surroundings as those of the person whom he had rescued—a mass of forms at once so unusual in type (connected as it was with cosmic processes considered from the oriental point of view) and at the same time so far larger in quantity than any one person normally carries with him. Here were the forms of oriental Gods, of the founders of religions, of Masters, Adepts, Angels, and all sorts of magnificent but unfamiliar conceptions. If we remember that the farmer could not know that these were only thought-forms, but must inevitably have taken them as actual living beings, we shall see that it is small wonder that with his ignorance on all such matters and his constant expectation of celestial assistance in his appointed work, he should feel that he had been specially guided by providence to help one who could help him in return—a person of importance in the oriental world commensurate with that which he arrogated to himself for the occident. At once he seized his opportunity; he proclaimed

himself as the appointed guide and proceeded to take charge of the lady's further development.

A curious fact noticed here was that, though he posed as guide, he was largely influenced by the thoughts of our correspondent, and in many cases simply gave her back those thoughts in other language. He knew nothing of the serpent fire, but he thought of it as some form of divine afflatus; he saw that some process of awakening was being performed by its aid, and he did his best to help and encourage this. Their joint efforts succeeded in arousing what may be called the upper layers of that mysterious force, though fortunately for the lady, from ignorance as to what is really needed for full achievement, they were not able to stir it to its depths, otherwise her body would surely have been destroyed. Further, they evidently did not know through what centres it must be sent in order to bring continuous consciousness, and so they missed their aim. But the description given of the sufferings endured is accurate as far as it goes, and some of the expressions used are strikingly suggestive. How dangerous their experiments were

may be seen from the lady's account of these sufferings, and from her family's testimony as to the condition in which she had been. The whole story gives a most impressive warning against the risk of attempting premature development along such lines.

It is useless to criticise in detail what may be called the Theosophical part of the vision; wonderful, uplifting, awe-inspiring as it no doubt was to the seer, it after all represents not the actual occurrences of evolution, but the combination and synthesis of a number of thought-images. Parts of the symbology are interesting and illuminative, while others obviously require modification. Certain features, such as the chanting of the angels, are clearly due to the influence of the Christian stream of thought in the mind of the guide. He watched the unfolding of the vision along with our correspondent, but being ignorant of oriental teaching he understood but little of it. For example, he seems to have confused the successive races with the various tribes of Israel, and tried to fit in what he saw with the story of the sealing of the 144,000. It is in the monomania of the guide that we must seek for the cause of the

weighty feeling of responsibility which overshadowed the whole vision, the conviction that upon our correspondent's success depended the salvation of the world. This sort of naive self-conceit or megalomania is one of the commonest characteristics of communications from the astral plane. It seems to be one of the most ordinary illusions of a dead man that, if he can only get some lady to act as a medium for him, he can revolutionise the entire thought of the planet by a simple statement of a few self-evident facts. But in this case there was rather more than the usual excuse for the attitude adopted. The poor farmer was deeply impressed with the thought that unless the world accepted him this time it would lose its final chance of salvation, and he propounded this theory one day to the deity in council at a moment when the nature-spirit happened to be in charge. It is little likely that the nature-spirit had any clear conception of the purport of the question, but at least he understood that his assent was being asked to some proposition or other, so he gave it in his most pompous manner; and this naturally enough confirmed the farmer

in his delusion, and made it the one dominating thought of his life. Apart from his influence no such impression would ever have come into the mind of the lady, whose view of her own position and powers was much saner and more modest.

The personification of the world and the devil in human forms is also due to the thought of the guide, for the lady herself knew much better than to believe in the exploded superstition of a personal Satan. This seems to have come at a period of the experience when she was much exhausted, and therefore more fully under the domination of the guide's mind, and less able to exercise her own natural power of discrimination. The nervous tension attendant upon the conditions through which she passed must have been indescribable; indeed, it brought her perilously near to the possibility of physical hallucination. She writes of certain acts of reverence made to her on the physical earth by animals, but investigation does not confirm this, showing the actions of the animals to have been quite normal and dictated by their ordinary instinct, though the lady in her overstrained condition gave them a different interpretation.

The special interest of the case to those who examined it was the manner in which a number of independent and quite ordinary astral factors combined to produce a dramatic and imposing whole. The ruling force was the will of the guide, and the strength of his extraordinary delusion; yet this would have been ineffective, or at least would have worked quite differently, but for the action of our correspondent in rashly laying herself open to astral influence. *The Secret Doctrine* class and its thought-forms, the other dead men on the council, the sportive nature-spirit—all these played their part, and if any one of them had been absent the picture would have been less complete, or the plot must have worked itself out on other lines.

It seems to me that the story has its value as showing the astonishing fertility and abundance of the resources of the astral world, and the imperative necessity of that full knowledge which is only to be gained by thorough occult training. All through it we see really good and well-intentioned people deceiving themselves quite pitifully for want of this knowledge—putting themselves often into such positions that one cannot wonder that they were deluded. One must presume that

it was needful for them to learn in the hard school of experience, and it is also well to remember that no trial of this nature ever comes to any one without an adequate opportunity of preparation. No one who had studied the bible as closely as the guide had done could have failed to remark the warnings therein contained as to possible deception by false Christs and lying prophets, and even in the book of Svami Vivekananda there is to be found an earnest adjuration against the premature or promiscuous use of his instructions. Unfortunately people never will take these cautions to themselves, but invariably apply them to their neighbours or opponents.

Yet it should be noticed that for our correspondent the outcome was good. The forms seen were largely illusory, but the high emotions awakened, the awe and the rapture—all these produced permanent results which cannot but have in them much of good. The boundless enthusiasm for spiritual things, the unselfish desire to help even at the cost of any sacrifice—these are in themselves mighty forces, and when generated they evoke a response from worlds far higher than any which are actually reached

by the consciousness in the vision itself. The feeling is genuine, however imperfectly conceived may be that which occasions it; and so while we congratulate our correspondent on having come safely through perils more tremendous than she can readily realise, we may be permitted to hope that the peace and uplifting which she gained through them may prove a permanent heritage. The deep sense of union with the divine which brought with it such bliss was unquestionably a true touch of the lower fringe of the intuitional world, and to have attained this is no doubt worth all the suffering through which the patient passed. But the student knows that all that (and much more) could have been obtained without the pain and without the awful risk, by the investment of the same amount of energy in the more ordinary methods which have approved themselves to the wisdom of the ages. To force one's way into unknown realms without the guidance of one who really knows is to court disaster; and it is a danger to which none need expose himself, for the old paths are always open, and the old saying still remains true: "When the pupil is ready the Master appears."

IN WRITING A BOOK

Many of us are constantly being influenced by unseen entities in a great many ways of which we have not the slightest idea. We have spoken of pride of race and caste. This often exists in an even more intense form as pride of family, and in that case not infrequently it is largely due to the influence of our ancestors. I have known several cases in which a man contrived to keep himself for a long time in the astral world in order that he might hover over his descendants and try to induce them to keep up the pride of their race. The late Queen Elizabeth, for example, had so intense a love for her country that it is only quite recently that she has lapsed into the heaven-world, having spent the whole intervening time in endeavouring, and until recently almost entirely without success, to impress her successors with her ideas of what ought to be done for England. Hers is perhaps an extreme case, but in several other royal families the continuity of tradition which has been maintained has been in the same way largely due to constant pressure intentionally

exercised, by older members of the family, from the astral world.

It is by no means uncommon for fathers and mothers who have set their hearts upon some particular alliance for their sons or daughters to endeavour even after death to bring about the fulfilment of their wishes. In rarer cases they have been able to show themselves as apparitions in order to emphasize their commands. More often they exercise an insidious because unsuspected influence, by constantly keeping their thought upon the matter before the mind of the person whom they wish to influence—a steady pressure which the ordinary man is likely to take for his own sub-conscious desire.

Cases in which the dead have constituted themselves guardian angels to the living are exceedingly numerous, and in this way mothers often protect their sons, and deceased husbands their widows, for many years. Sometimes such influence is not of a protective character, but is exercised in order that the dead man may find a means of expressing some ideas which he is anxious to put before the world. The person upon whom the impression is made is sometimes

conscious of it, and sometimes entirely unconscious. A certain distinguished novelist has told me that the wonderful plots of his stories invariably come to him as though, by a kind of inspiration, that he writes them without knowing beforehand how they will work out—that in fact, as he puts it, they are actually written through him. Far more often than we think, authors and musical composers are influenced in this way, so that many books credited to the living are really the work of the dead.

In some cases the dead man desires to announce his authorship, so that books confessedly written by the dead are becoming quite a feature of modern literature; or perhaps a better way to express it would be that many of us are gradually coming to recognise that there is no such thing as death in the old bad sense of the word, and that though a man who has laid aside his physical body may find a certain difficulty in writing a book with his own hand, he is quite as capable of dictating one as any living author. Sometimes such books are moral or metaphysical treatises, but sometimes also they are novels, and in this latter shape they undoubtedly do good, for they reach many

who are quite unlikely to encounter a more serious essay on occult matters, and would be still less likely to take the trouble to read it if they did encounter it.

A good specimen of this class (and it is a class which is becoming more numerous year by year) is *The Strange Story of Ahrinziman*—a book which was brought to my notice some years ago. Let me take it as an example and explain what it is and how it came to be written. I know that the first impulse of those who are dozing in the comfortable haze which surrounds the average intelligence and cushions it against the real facts of life, will naturally be to proclaim that the whole thing must be nonsense, on the crude theory that when a man is dead he *is* dead, and it is therefore quite impossible that he should dictate anything; and even those who know better than that may be tempted to suspect that to assign the authorship to a man out of the body is nothing but a novel form of advertisement—a trick of the trade, as it were. So perhaps I had better begin by saying that I have trustworthy assurance that this book is at least a genuine dictation from the astral world, though naturally that

by no means guarantees that it is in all other respects what it claims to be.

People who are unacquainted with the conditions of life among those whom we are in the habit of miscalling 'the dead,' seem to find it impossible to realise how natural in all respects that life is, or to understand that human nature may and does exhibit all its varied aspects just as quaintly on the other side of the grave as on this. The dead man has not necessarily been canonised, nor has he suddenly become grave and reverend; he is exactly the same man as before, just as susceptible to the influence of vanity or jealousy, just as capable of making mistakes.

An astral author may employ the same literary machinery as a physical author, and may cast his tale into any form that pleases him. When we find Mr. Rider Haggard writing in the first person under the name of Allan Quatermain or Ludwig Horace Holly, we do not necessarily assume that he is relating personal experiences of his own, nor even that Quatermain or Holly had a historical existence. In exactly the same way we must realise that when a dead man dictates in the first person *The*

Story of Ahrinziman, he may be trying to give us a more or less modified autobiography, or he may simply be casting an allegory or a problem-novel into an attractive and striking form; and this suggestion must no more be considered a reflection upon the *bona fides* of the dead author than was the previous sentence a reflection upon that of Mr. Haggard.

Be this as it may, Ahrinziman tells us a good story—a story which is thoroughly oriental in its setting. He describes himself as the illegitimate son of a Persian king. His mother, a Greek vestal virgin captured in some Persian foray, is murdered by the rightful queen in a fit of jealousy, and to avoid further unpleasant expression of this same consuming jealousy, the child is brought up by a peasant among the mountains in a distant corner of the empire. The boy is by nature clairvoyant to a certain extent, able to see the nature-spirits which surround him, and also his dead mother. Presently he comes into contact with some priests, learns much from them, and is eventually taken into the temple and becomes a medium for them. Discontent seizes him, and he absconds and joins a band of robbers in the

mountains, but after a few years abandons them in turn. He then meets with a practitioner of the darker magic, and attaches himself to him as a pupil; but the master dies in the performance of one of his enchantments, and the student is saved from sharing his fate only by the interference of his dead mother.

During further wanderings he meets the prince, who is in reality his step-brother (the son of the queen who murdered his mother), and is enabled by his clairvoyant power to cure him of an obsession. This prince in due course comes to the throne and raises our hero to a position of honour, knowing nothing, however, of the real relationship between them. By this time Ahrinziman is married, unfortunately to an entirely unworthy woman who never really appreciates him, and is false to him without hesitation when she finds that she has attracted the favourable regards of the king. Through his partial clairvoyance Ahrinziman becomes aware of this, and in his jealous rage causes the death of the king by astral means. He himself succeeds to the throne (having declared his parentage) but after a short reign is slain by another claimant.

The rest of the book is devoted to a description of his experiences in the astral world. He is represented as at first filled with jealousy and hatred, and consequently mating with all sorts of horrible entities in order through them to achieve revenge; but gradually the good within him asserts itself, and he begins to try to aid instead of to injure, and so through a long and toilsome upward progress he at last attains to perfect bliss.

How far is it possible that all this can be true? May we take it wholly or partly as the autobiography which it professes to be, or must we regard it as a romance? Certainly of much of it we may say "*Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*" As to the physical part of the story, we have but meagre records of what took place in Persia in the fifth century before the Christian era, but as far as it goes, our fragmentary history of that period seems to fit in fairly accurately with what Ahrinziman writes. The interest of the student of the hidden side of nature will naturally be centred chiefly on the astral experiences, for the sake of which mainly the book is put forth, and he will desire to know how far these can be confirmed

from the point of view of such occult knowledge as has reached our western world.

Those who have studied most deeply will be the first to admit that in this splendid science of the soul we are as yet but picking up pebbles on the shore of the great ocean of knowledge, that our fullest information is as yet far from exhaustive, and that the marvellous variety and adaptability of astral conditions are so great that it would be rash to say that anything is impossible. Still, certain broad rules are well established, and some of these seem to be violated by Ahrinziman's story, if we are to take it literally, though all falls readily into place if we allow for certain limitations upon his part. If the whole thing is simply a parable, well and good; but it is interesting to see how Ahrinziman may be perfectly honest in his narration, even though some points in it are contrary to accepted facts.

The first great question is whether a stay of anything like such a period as two thousand three hundred years in the astral world is at all possible, since we know that twenty or thirty years is a fair average for ordinary persons. It is true that a man of unusual will-power may greatly prolong

his astral life by intensifying his passions and desires, and throwing all his strength into the lower rather than the higher side of himself; and this is exactly what Ahrinziman represents himself to have done. I have read of a case in Germany where an erring priest was earth-bound for four hundred years, and I have myself known one where ambition and a determined will detained a person in astral life for three hundred; but such instances are infrequent, and none of them even approach the vista of centuries claimed by Ahrinziman. It is clear, too, that he does not consider himself by any means as a special case, for he speaks of many friends and contemporaries as still with him, some in advance of him in progress, and some behind him. If, therefore, we are to accept his story as genuine, it becomes more probable if we regard it rather as an attempt to describe conditions through which he passed during the first century after his death than as indicating anything at present existing.

Though eager for occult knowledge, he did not show much attraction towards spirituality, except in childhood; his actions were chiefly the result of ambition, passion and revenge,

and he died by violence in the prime of life. Considering all these factors we should expect a protracted and stormy astral existence, the earlier part of which would probably be extremely unpleasant; we should expect also that gradually the passions would wear themselves out, that the better side of his nature would assert itself, and that opportunities would be offered for progress.

All this is what Ahrinziman describes, but he surrounds it with a wealth of allegory that may easily be misunderstood, and he spreads over two thousand three hundred years what may well have occupied forty or fifty. We must not forget that in the astral world none of our ordinary methods of time-measurement are available, and that if, even in physical life, a few hours of suffering or anxiety seem to us almost interminable, this characteristic is exaggerated a hundred-fold in an existence of which feelings and passions are the very essence. While it is scarcely conceivable that Ahrinziman can really have spent two thousand years in the astral world, it is easy to believe that his sojourn there *seemed* to him an eternity.

Still the fact remains that, if he is to be credited as to the physical part of his life,

about that length of time has passed since his assassination; what then has he been doing during all these years? I have no personal acquaintance with him, and no right to make impertinent enquiries, but a case somewhat parallel to his which I recently investigated may suggest to us a possible explanation.

I was consulted by a lady who stated that her 'spirit guide' was a priest of ancient Egypt; and as the advice which he gave was good, and his teaching accurate, it seemed worth while to inquire into his reasons for making so extraordinary a claim, as it appeared scarcely likely that so dignified and upright a man would stoop to the common and petty device of impersonation. On meeting him I saw at once that he had unquestionably been initiated up to a certain level into the Mysteries according to the Egyptian Rite, and naturally I wondered how it could be that he was still active in the astral world. Upon examination I found that since his life as an Egyptian priest he had had another incarnation, which he had spent wearily and unsatisfactorily within the walls of a monastery, devoting it apparently to the

working out of some accumulations of karma ; but after his death certain circumstances (it *seemed* a mere accident) brought him into touch with the thought-current of his old Egyptian surroundings.

Instantly the memory of that previous life flashed into his consciousness (I think it had always been hovering upon the threshold, and he had always been hungering, though he did not know for what) and it was so much more vivid and real than the dull monastic round that the latter became to him a mere evil dream. He soon forgot it altogether, or regarded it as nothing more than a wearisome part of his astral punishment, and so he was really quite honest in his statement that he *was* that Egyptian priest—the powerful personality with which he had identified himself up to the close of his last life in the heaven-world, just before his descent into the comparatively recent incarnation in which he became a monk. I do not assert that Ahrinziman's case is similar, but it is at least possible that it may be.

Naturally Ahrinziman writes as a man of his day, and uses the terminology to which he is accustomed, much of which sounds

odd in our ears to-day, especially as he constantly confounds his symbols with material facts. Of course it is not actually true, as he supposes, that men are divided into three great groups, having at their heads angels bearing respectively white, red, and golden stars, any more than it is actually true that Phoebus drives his chariot daily across the sky from east to west, or that the Sun God is newly born at Christmas when the days begin to grow longer. But it is true that some ancient religions adopted a system of symbology closely allied to that which this book puts forth, and that a man passing into astral life with his mind filled with such preconceived ideas might go on for a long time interpreting everything in accordance with them, and ignoring facts which they did not cover.

It is true also that mighty spirits exist whose method of evolution is so entirely different from our own, that *for us* it would be evil; but with them we do not normally come into contact, nor is it of them that Ahrinziman speaks, for he himself admits that his angels of light and darkness are after all human beings who have lived their life on earth. He describes vividly the

stupendous thought-edifices reared by man's passions, though he often fails to distinguish the temporary thought-images from the more permanent realities of the world. He gives us a horrible description of a kind of astral battle in which the plain is strewn with the *dissecta membra* of the 'combatants—a gruesome detail which could not really occur, as will at once be manifest to anyone who comprehends the fluidic nature of the astral body.

Indeed, if his remarks are really to be taken as representing the ancient Persian knowledge with regard to things astral, we are compelled to recognise that that presentation was less definitely scientific, as well as less comprehensive, than that which is put before students of the occult at the present day. For example, Ahrinziman does not seem to have any clear grasp of the great central fact of reincarnation, or perhaps regards it as an occasional possibility, instead of recognising it as the appointed means of evolution for humanity.

His use of terms is somewhat perplexing until one becomes accustomed to it, for it is fairly evident that he gives the name of 'spiritual body' to what we now call

the astral vehicle, and that his 'astral body' is nothing more than the etheric double—as may be seen when he describes the latter as slightly larger than the physical, and as capable of being influenced by powerful acids; remarks which are true of the etheric double, but would be inaccurate if they referred to what is now termed the astral body. He has also a confusing habit of speaking of unpleasant astral conditions as below the earth-plane, and pleasant ones as above it, though he describes them both as less material than our earth. He has probably been misled by the fact that the denser astral matter does interpenetrate our physical globe, and that those who are confined to the least desirable subdivision may often find themselves actually within the crust of the earth. In addition to this there is, no doubt, a world lower than the physical—one with which normal humanity has happily no connection; but it is more, and not less, material than the world which we think we know.

Quite frequently he describes something in language which at once convinces the student that he has unquestionably seen that of which he writes; and then he proceeds to

disappoint us by accounting for it in an involved and unscientific manner, or by treating poetic symbols as though they were material facts. Once or twice he shows his conceptions to be tainted by the twin-soul theory—a line of thought to be sedulously avoided by all who wish to make any real advance in occult study.

He is in error when he speaks of mediumship as a necessity for spiritual evolution—though perhaps this is once more merely a question of terminology, as he may be using the word in the sense of psychic sensitiveness. He is, however, clearly wrong when he says that it is impossible for a man still possessing a physical body fully to comprehend or to control astral forces and beings, or to have perfect spiritual sight. What he no doubt means, or at least ought to mean, is that a man who is still *confined* to his physical body cannot possess these higher powers, for he has not realised that a man may learn during life how to leave his physical body as completely as at death, and may yet return to it when he wishes. Also he shows ignorance of the Oriental teaching when he stigmatises it as selfish, and opines that by it “the eager hunger of the starving

many for light is left unsatisfied." On the whole, however, his teaching is commendably free from sectarianism.

Though the student of occultism thus finds himself compelled to differ from Ahrinziman on certain points, I hasten to add that there are many upon which we must all most thoroughly agree with him. To take at random a few of the many gems which may be found, his criticisms on war and conquest, and on the history of religions, are admirable. We are all with him when he writes :

"I hold that truth and error, good and evil, are to be found everywhere and in all religions and amongst all peoples ; and no matter how pure the original doctrines of any form of faith may be, it is impossible to prevent the ambitions and the lusts, the greed and the cruelty of the undeveloped human soul from perverting the purity of the teachings and turning them to the basest purposes and overlaying them with the grossest errors. . . The absurd ordinances, the horrible sacrifices, the revolting practices, the grotesque beliefs, the fantastic theories, that had crept into the teaching of this religion, were all excrescences fastened one by one upon the simple purity of the teaching of its founder."

His terminology is perhaps not the best possible, yet there is much truth in his thought that all evil is a perversion of some good quality, into which it will one day be transmuted. Many of his ideas as to spiritual development are also greatly to be commended. The dangers of mediumship and hypnotism could hardly be better expressed than in this solemn warning:

“Let no one ever resign the sovereignty of himself, his mind or body, into the hands of another, be he priest or layman. For a man’s freedom is his divine prerogative, and he who yields it to another is more abject than the lowest slave.”

Again it is explained in one of the notes:

“A perfect trance should be the conscious flight of the soul into a superior condition, from which it ought to return strengthened and refreshed and capable of wider thoughts and nobler and freer actions, and a stronger and more perfect possession of its own individuality. To apply the word ‘trance’ to those exhibitions of semi-conscious mental aberration of persons whose sensitiveness lays them open to the mesmeric control of either incarnate or excarnate minds is to propagate an error which ought long ago to have been

exploded. With the spread of mediumistic development all and every variety and degree of sub-conscious conditions have come to be classed as 'trances,' yet they bear no more resemblance to the true trance of the developed mystic of the older occult faiths than does the sleep which is produced by the use of powerful narcotic drugs resemble that of healthy tired nature. The hypnotically-induced trance is as pernicious to the soul as would be the habitual use of narcotics to the body. Whether the magnetiser be in the flesh or out of it, the results are the same; an habitual use of magnetism to induce sleep or 'trance' is an evil."

He describes accurately how the lower dead crowd to séances, and how the so-called guides are by no means always strong enough to keep off evil influences. Clearly also does he warn us how readily the ideas of the earthly enquirers mingle with the revelations of the magnetised medium, so that by such a method of investigation a man usually receives such information or counsel as he desires or expects. He understands that asceticism *as such* is useless and often harmful, and that the physical body must be in perfect health and power if visions are to

be reliable. He realises, too, something of the difficulties of the way :

“Few, very few, who possess the needful clearness of sight ever learn how to use it successfully ; still fewer have the indomitable will and the unquenchable thirst for knowledge which will carry them through all the dangers and trials and disappointments, and the infinite toil and labour involved in these studies.”

He has all history on his side when he tells us that those who develop the highest degrees of power will do well entirely to withdraw themselves from active life in the physical world, and his strange congeries of characters is gradually brought to understand that only through unselfishness is real progress possible.

Again and again little touches of knowledge leap to the eyes of the student, showing that things have been rightly seen, even though the expression may be confused for want of more definite classification of the facts. Ahrinziman understands the making of talismans and potions ; he sees how a single action or thought of revenge opens the door to evil influences which may cling to its author for years to come ; he describes

how the presence of the dead causes the living to think of them, even though not sufficiently developed to perceive them.

In writing of astral life, he gives us a fine description of the wicked queen surrounded after death by evil thoughts and memories, which to her were as actual events; and a grimly realistic touch is the account of the slave who spends his time in crawling ever backwards and forwards through the secret passage in the making of which he was murdered. He tells us of the dead who have a confused impression that they are still in their earthly bodies, and of those others who, having realised their separation, try to use the earthly bodies of living men as mediums for the gratification of their passion. He comprehends, too, how men who stand side by side, as far as space is concerned, may yet be absolutely unconscious of one another; he knows the glorious truth that no evil can be eternal, that however far from the Path the erring soul may wander, at long, long last it also will find its homeward way.

He ends with a hope which we all may echo—that, as the barriers of ignorance which so long have divided nation from nation are

gradually wearing thinner before the radiating force of knowledge, and the light of brotherhood is beginning faintly to shine through, so the same wider knowledge and clearer insight may, by degrees, set at naught the imaginary barrier which we have misnamed death, showing us that there is in truth no separation after all, since whether at the moment we happen to have physical bodies or not, we are all members of the same great fraternity, all moving towards the same goal, all enveloped in the sunlight of the same Eternal Love.

CHAPTER XIII

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THESE INFLUENCES

PROTECTIVE SHELLS

WE have considered specimens of the various kinds of influences which are coming in upon us from all sides, and we find that among such influences are many which are disturbing and undesirable; so a question naturally arises as to how we can best avoid or neutralise these. It is an easy matter to form round oneself when necessary a sort of temporary suit of armour of higher matter—what is commonly called by students a protective shell. But is this the best way to meet the difficulty? An authority on the subject once remarked that, as far as self-protection is concerned, the best thing to do with a shell is not to form it in

the first place, and if one has formed it, to break it up as speedily as possible! There is certainly a good deal of truth in these words, for in the majority of cases (at least among all but the most elementary students) all that can be achieved by the formation of a shell round oneself can also be done more effectively and with less danger in other ways, as we shall see later. Exact knowledge as to the formation of shells of various kinds is sometimes useful; but, like most other knowledge, it may be abused, so before directing one's energies along these lines it is desirable to know exactly what one wishes to do and how it is to be achieved.

The first great principle to bear in mind is that a shell should be used far more frequently for the protection of others than for oneself. The Invisible Helpers, for example, frequently find it desirable to make such a defence for some of those whom they are trying to save from evil influences of various sorts. But the average enquirer has more often in mind the idea of protecting himself against various outer influences, and he usually asks how he may form a shell for that purpose. There are

occasions in which such action is allowable, and we may perhaps group these under three heads corresponding to the etheric, the astral and the mental vehicles.

In all cases alike these shells are constructed by the power of the will, but before exercising that power it is well to know of what kind of matter the shell is to be built and what it is desired to keep out. The directions usually given are that the student should think of his aura as surrounding him in ovoid form, should concentrate strongly upon the outer surface of that aura, and should then exert his will to harden it so that it may become impervious to any influences from without. These directions are good, and a fairly strong shell can be made in that way; but the effort will be at the same time much less laborious and much more effective if the man understands exactly what he is doing and why, and so can send forth the energy of his will in the right direction only, instead of flooding the whole neighbourhood with a stream of ill-directed force. Let us then consider the three varieties somewhat in detail, and see for what purpose each is appropriate.

THE ETHERIC SHELL

We will take first that which is intended to protect the physical body (including the etheric double) from various dangers to which it may be liable. The more common uses of such a shell are three—to protect a sensitive man when in a crowd; to shield the physical body at night when the man leaves it in sleep; and to prevent the danger of physical infection on some occasion when the student has in the course of his duty to subject himself to it. In all these cases it is obvious that the shell must be of etheric matter and of etheric matter only, if it is to be effective for its purpose, although it may sometimes be desirable to create other shells in other worlds simultaneously to afford protection from other classes of dangers.

The object of a shell in a crowd is usually two-fold. In a mixed multitude of ordinary people there will almost certainly be a great deal of physical magnetism of a kind distasteful to the student and even prejudicial to him, and part of his object in shelling himself is to defend himself against that. It is also probable that in any large

crowd there may be a certain number of those unfortunate persons who, being themselves in some way physically weak, are constantly drawing large amounts of vitality from others. Such absorption often takes place entirely without the knowledge of the person temporarily benefited by it, so that he may be regarded as a kind of unconscious etheric kleptomaniac.

One who has thus the misfortune to be an unconscious vampire may be compared to a gigantic sponge, always ready to absorb any amount of specialised vitality which it can obtain. If he confines himself to seizing upon the bluish-white radiations, which every normal person throws out, he will do no harm, for the matter of which these are composed has already been received and dealt with by the person from whose aura it is taken. But usually this is not all that he takes, for on the approach of the vampire this outpouring is greatly stimulated by his drawing force, so that not only the already-utilised bluish-white fluid is lost, but by intense suction the whole circulation of the vitality through the body of the victim is so hastened that the rose-coloured matter is drawn out with

the refuse through all the pores of the body, and the unfortunate original owner has not time to assimilate it: so that a capable vampire can drain a person of the whole of his strength in a visit of a few minutes.

Such an unconscious vampire is assuredly always an object of pity; yet it would be a great mistake if, because of that pity, any victim voluntarily allowed himself to be depleted, with the idea that he was thereby serving and helping one in sore need. The vampire invariably wastes the substance which he thus nefariously acquires. It rushes through him and is dissipated again without proper assimilation, so that his ever-present thirst is never satiated, and to endeavour by abundant self-sacrifice to fill him up is exactly, to use an expressive Indian proverb, like pouring water into a bag with a hole in it.

The only thing that can really be done to help a confirmed unconscious vampire is to supply the vitality for which he craves in strictly limited quantities, while endeavouring, by mesmeric action, to restore the elasticity of the etheric double, so that the perpetual suction and corresponding leakage shall no longer take place. Such a leakage

invariably flows through every pore of the body on account of this lack of etheric elasticity—not through a sort of tear or wound in the etheric body, as some students have supposed; indeed, the idea of anything in the nature of a permanent tear or wound is incompatible with the conditions of etheric matter and the constitution of the etheric double.

A strong shell is one way of guarding oneself against such vampirism, and there are many people for whom at present it may be the only way open.

In the case of normal and healthy people there is usually no trouble with the physical body which is left behind when the man himself moves away in sleep or in trance, for in the improbable event of any sort of attack being made upon it the body would instantly recall the wandering soul, so that the whole man would be at hand to defend himself if necessary. The physical body has a consciousness of its own, quite apart from that of the man who inhabits it—a vague consciousness truly, but still capable of knowing when its vehicle is in danger, and of instinctively taking whatever steps are in its power to protect

it. I have myself seen that consciousness manifest itself when the owner of the body had been driven out of it by a dentist's administration of laughing gas—manifest itself in a vague outcry and an inefficient attempt at protesting action when the tooth was extracted, though the man himself afterwards reported that he had been absolutely unconscious of the operation.

As the physical body always remains intimately attached by sympathetic vibration to the astral, even when the latter is far away from it, any disturbance which threatens the physical is almost sure to be communicated instantly to the ego, who promptly returns to investigate.

There are, however, abnormal and unfortunate people who are subject to the attacks of certain entities who desire to seize upon and obsess their bodies, and such people sometimes find it necessary to take strong measures to retain possession of their personal property. Or again, perhaps circumstances may compel the student to sleep in exceedingly undesirable surroundings—as, for example, in a railway carriage in close physical contact with people of the vampirising type or of coarse and forbidding emanations. In either of these

cases a strong etheric shell might be the best way of meeting the difficulty, though the student has the alternative of making a strong thought-form animated with the purpose of guarding the body. Such a thought-form may be made even more effective and vivid if a nature spirit of appropriate type can be induced to enter into it and take a delight in carrying out its object.

The idea of protection from infection is sufficiently obvious to need no special comment. Such infection can enter only by means of physical germs of some sort, and against these a dense wall of etheric matter is a sure protection. It must never be forgotten, however, that a shell which keeps *out* matter of a certain type must also keep it *in*; so that in guarding ourselves against germs which may bring contagion we are also keeping in close contact with the physical body a great mass of its own emanations, many of which are distinctly poisonous in character.

In the cases above-mentioned the shell to be made is of etheric matter only, and the man who wishes to make it must recollect that his etheric body is by no means co-terminous with the astral or mental. Both

of the latter adopt the shape and size of that ovoid section of the causal body, which alone of its characteristics can manifest in the lower worlds. The etheric body, however, is of the shape of the physical, and projects slightly from its surface in all directions—perhaps a quarter of an inch or so. If, therefore, the plan of densifying the periphery of the aura is to be adopted, the man who tries the experiment must recollect where that periphery lies, and direct his will-power accordingly.

He has, however, the alternative of a making an ovoid shell of etheric matter drawn from the surrounding atmosphere. That course is in many ways preferable, but demands a far greater exertion of the will and a much more definite knowledge of the way in which physical matter is moulded by it. Such a shell as has been described, though invisible to ordinary sight, is purely in the physical world, and therefore guards its creator only against definitely physical emanations. It does not in the least affect the entrance of wandering thoughts or of astral vibrations tending to produce passions and emotions of various kinds.

Some sensitive people find it impossible to come near those suffering from any

weakness or disease without immediately reproducing in their own physical bodies the symptoms of the sufferers. In such cases an etheric shell may be useful, as without it the sensitive man is largely precluded by this abnormal keenness of sympathy from assisting such people.

Again, for those whose business makes it necessary for them to live and move in the midst of the horrible din of our modern civilisation such a shell may sometimes prove useful, as giving the tired and harassed nerves at least something of an opportunity for recovery, by protecting them for a while from the otherwise incessant hammering of all the multiplex vibrations which constitute modern life.

SHIELDS

In some cases what is called for is not a shell surrounding the whole body, but simply a small local shield to guard oneself against some special temporary contact. All sensitive people are aware that the western custom of shaking hands often brings with it positive torment, lasting not infrequently for some hours after the moment of contact.

Often to go out of one's way to avoid shaking hands may cause offence, or may give an impression of pride or of an assumption of superiority. The difficulty may usually be obviated by making an effort of the will which covers the right hand with a strong-temporary shield of etheric matter, so that the sensitive may endure the unpleasant contact without allowing a single particle charged with undesirable magnetism to enter his body.

Of the same nature as this, though requiring for their successful manipulation a far greater knowledge of practical magic, are the shells which are sometimes used as a protection against fire. I have myself had such a shell of etheric matter made over the palm of my hand at a spiritualistic séance—made so effectively that, although it was too thin to be observable by the senses, it yet enabled me to hold in my hand for several minutes a glowing coal, from which, while I held it, I was able to light a piece of paper. A still more extended application of the same idea is the much larger shield spread over the glowing ashes, or over the feet of the participants, in the fire-walking experiment, which has been so often described.

A WARNING

Students wishing for some reason to guard their physical bodies during sleep may be warned not to repeat the mistake made some time ago by a worthy friend, who took a great deal of trouble to surround himself with a specially impenetrable shell on a certain occasion, but made it of astral instead of etheric matter, and consequently took it away with him when he left his physical body! Naturally the result was that his physical body was left entirely unprotected, while he himself floated about all night enclosed in triple armour, absolutely incapable of sending out a single vibration to help anybody, or of being helped or beneficially influenced by any loving thoughts which may have been directed towards him by teachers or friends.

THE ASTRAL SHELL

The objects aimed at in making an astral shell are naturally of an entirely different type, since they must be connected only with passions and emotions. Most of them also fall under three heads. A shell may be formed round the astral body, first, to

keep out emotional vibrations intentionally directed by others at the student, such as those of anger, envy or hatred; secondly, to keep out casual vibrations of low type (such as those evoking sensuality) which are not intentionally directed at the student, but are to be found floating in the surrounding atmosphere, and impinge upon him as it were by accident in the course of ordinary life; thirdly, a student may find it useful to surround his astral body with a special shell during the time which he devotes to meditation, if he has been troubled with the intrusion of thoughts of a low type, which bring with them astral matter and are calculated to provoke undesirable emotion.

In any or all of these cases the effort of the will should be directed to the surface of the astral body—not to that counterpart of denser astral matter which is exactly the shape and size of the physical vehicle, but to the egg of surrounding aura, as depicted in the illustrations in *Man Visible and Invisible*. In this, and in all other cases of forming a shell, a clear mental picture must be made, and the whole of the person's will-power must be concentrated for at least some minutes upon the definite

effort to create the necessary shape. It must also be remembered that such densifications are to a certain extent unnatural; that is to say, they are an arrangement of matter which is not that normally contemplated in the scheme of things, and consequently there is a constant tendency in the vehicle concerned to resume its normal condition, which, of course, means a constant tendency to disintegration in the shell. The effort of will, therefore, must make a definite impression, sufficient to resist for at least some hours this gentle but persistent effort at disintegration, otherwise the shell will gradually become pervious and ragged, and so fail to fulfil its object. A shell which is required for any length of time should be frequently renewed as without that process it will soon collapse.

In connection with the astral body we must bear in mind the same consideration to which I referred in the case of the etheric body—that if a shell will keep out vibrations it will also keep them in. The student who makes an astral shell round himself should therefore be careful to build it only of the material of the lower subdivisions of the astral, as it is exclusively this matter

which responds to the low and undesirable vibrations connected with sensuality, malice, hatred, envy and all other such ignoble passions. The finer emotions, on the contrary, always express themselves through the matter of the higher subdivisions. It is unnecessary that any matter of this kind should be used in a shell. Indeed, the effects if such matter were used would be eminently unsatisfactory, as, first, a man would keep away from himself any currents of friendly feeling which might be sent to him, and secondly, he would render himself for the time incapable of sending out similar currents of affectionate feeling to others.

It may be asked how it is possible for the ordinary man or even for the younger student to know what kind of astral matter he is employing in the making of his shell. The answer is that that is after all no more difficult than the conception of making a shell at all. If he is to make the shell of astral matter he must first think of the limits of his aura, and then proceed to densify the matter at all those points. The process may therefore be described as an intelligent use of the imagination; and this imagination may just as well be directed with a little more

trouble to the conception that the astral body consists of seven degrees of matter, differing in density. The will should be directed to sorting out these, selecting only the material of (let us say) the three lower sub-planes, and forming the shell exclusively of that; and though the student may be unable to see clairvoyantly the result of his effort he need not doubt that it will produce its effect, and that no types of matter but those of which he thinks will be directly influenced by the currents which he is enabled to send forth.

THE MENTAL SHELL

The shell made round the mental body differs from that in the astral world in that the object is no longer to prevent undesirable emotion, but undesirable thought. Once more, there are three principal occasions on which such a shell may be useful: first, in meditation; secondly, when sleep is approaching; thirdly, under special conditions where without its help lower thoughts would be likely to obtrude themselves.

The office of the mental shell in meditation is to exclude the mass of lower thought

which is perpetually playing about in the atmosphere. No shell can prevent wandering thoughts from arising within the man's own mind; but most of our thought-wandering is caused by the impact from without; of casual floating thoughts which have been left about by other people, and the intrusion of these at least can be prevented by a shell. But here again it is advisable that only the lower mental matter should be employed in the making of such a shell, as otherwise helpful thought might be kept out, or the man's own thought might be hampered as he poured it forth towards the Master.

Many people find themselves troubled with streams of wandering thought when they are trying to fall asleep; a mental shell will deliver them from such of these thoughts as come from without. Such a shell need only be temporary, since all that is required is peace for an interval sufficient to allow the man to fall asleep. The man will carry away with him this shell of mental matter when he leaves his physical body, but its work will then be accomplished, since the whole object of making it is to permit him to leave that body. The stream of idle

thoughts or mental worry will probably reassert itself when the shell breaks up, but as the man will then be away from his physical brain this will not interfere with the repose of the body. So long as he is in his physical body the mental action will affect the particles of the brain and produce there such activity as may easily make it impossible for the man to quit the physical vehicle; but when once he is away from the latter, the same worry or wondering thought will not bring him back to it.

The third case to which reference has been made is less simple. It occurs not infrequently that certain groups of thought, some wholly desirable, and some equally undesirable, are closely linked together. To take the first example which comes: it is well known that deep devotion and a certain form of sensuality are frequently almost inextricably mingled. A man who finds himself troubled by this unpleasant conjunction may reap the benefit of the devotion without suffering from the ill effects of the sensuality, by surrounding his mental body with a rigid shell so far as its lower subdivisions are concerned, for in this way

he will effectually shut out the lower influences while still allowing the higher to play upon him unhindered. This is but one example of a phenomenon of which there are many varieties in the mental world.

THE BEST USE OF A SHELL

When a shell has to be made, the method which I have indicated above is probably the easiest by which to make it, but there still remains a further consideration—the question as to whether on the whole the shell is an undesirable thing. It has its uses—indeed it is eminently necessary as applied to other people. The Invisible Helper frequently finds it invaluable when he is trying to relieve some poor harassed soul who has not as yet the strength to protect himself, either against definite and intentional attacks from without, or against the ever-present swirl of the wearisome wandering thought. But to think of using a shell for oneself is to a certain extent a confession of weakness or of defect, for there seems little doubt that, if we were all that we ought to be, we should need no protection of this nature.

A BEAUTIFUL STORY

A beautiful little story from the traditions of the Christian Church illustrates this very happily. It is recorded that somewhere in the desert at the back of Alexandria there was once a monastery whose abbot possessed the power of clairvoyance. Among his monks there were two young men who had an especial reputation for purity and holiness—qualities which ought to be common to all monks, but sometimes are not. One day when they were singing in the choir it occurred to the abbot to turn his clairvoyant faculty upon these two young men, in the endeavour to discover how they contrived to preserve this especial purity amidst the temptations of daily life. So he looked at the first young man and saw that he had surrounded himself with a shell as of glittering crystal, and that when the tempting demons (impure thought-forms we should call them) came rushing at him, they struck against this shell, and fell back without injuring him, so that he remained inside his shell, calm and cold and pure. Then the abbot looked at the second young monk, and he saw that he had built

no shell round himself, but that his heart was so full of the love of God that it was perpetually radiating from him in all directions in the shape of torrents of love for his fellow-men, so that when the tempting demons sprang at him with fell intent they were all washed away in that mighty outpouring stream, and so he also remained pure and undefiled. And it is recorded that the abbot said that the second monk was nearer to the kingdom of heaven than the first.

THE BETTER WAY

It may be that many of us have not yet reached the level of this second young monk; but at least the story sets before us a higher ideal than that of mere self-protection, and we may well learn something of a lesson from him. We must, however, carefully guard ourselves against the feeling of superiority or separateness. We must avoid the danger of thinking too much about the self. We must keep ourselves constantly in a condition of outpouring; we must be active, not passive. When we meet a person our attitude surely should be

not "How can I guard myself against you?" but rather, "What can I do for you?" It is this latter attitude which calls into play the higher forces, because it reflects the attitude of the Solar Deity. It is when we give that we become fit to receive, that we are channels of the mighty force of the Deity Himself.

We need not even think too much about personal progress. It is possible to be so exclusively occupied with the idea, "How can I get on?" as to forget the even more important question "What can I do to help?" And there are some good brothers, even among the best that we have, who are so perpetually examining themselves as to their progress as to remind one forcibly of those children who, when special plots of garden-ground are given to them, are constantly pulling up their plants to see how the roots are growing. This over-anxiety is a real danger; I know many who, while doing the most beautiful altruistic actions, can yet never feel quite sure that their intentions are truly unselfish, since they always doubt whether it is not perhaps a selfish desire to avoid the discomfort caused by seeing pain in others which moves them to action!

Such brothers should remember that self-examination may degenerate into morbid introspection, and that the main object is that they should point themselves in the right direction and then simply go ahead and do the best they can—that, to quote our Christian story, they should first fill their hearts with the love of God and then (without spending all their time in weighing that love, to see whether it is increasing or diminishing) should turn their whole attention to the practical expression of it in love of their fellow-men. Not only is such outpouring of love a better defence than any number of shells, but it is also an investment producing stupendous results. For the man who thinks nothing of result is precisely he who is producing the greatest of all results.

We have read of the splendid self-sacrifice of the Nirmanakayas, who, having won the right to untold ages of rest in bliss unspeakable, yet have chosen to remain within touch of earth, in order that they may spend their time in the generation of incalculable streams of spiritual force, which are poured into a mighty reservoir, to be spent in helping on the evolution of their less developed fellows. The great Hierarchy

Adepts is entrusted with the dispensing of this force for the good of the 'great orphan' humanity, and it is upon this that They (and even Their pupils, under Their direction) draw when necessity arises.

Needless to say, nothing that we can do can come within measurable distance of the marvellous achievement of the Nirmanakaya; yet it is in the power of every one of us to add some tiny drops at least to the contents of that mighty reservoir, for whenever we pour out from ourselves love or devotion which is utterly without thought of self we produce results which lie far beyond our ken.

All affection or devotion, however noble, which has in it the least thought of self (as in the case of one who desires the return of his affection, or a reward of protection or salvation for his devotion—one who thinks not "How much I love so-and-so!" but "I wonder how much so-and-so loves *me*")—all such affection or devotion sends its force in closed curves which return upon those who generated it, and the karma which such force makes binds a man and brings him back to birth, that he may receive the result of it, just as surely as if the karma were evil.

But when self has been absolutely forgotten, when such thought has neither part nor lot in the stream which is outpoured, when the curve is no longer closed but open, then the karma does *not* bind the man nor bring him back to earth. Yet the effect is produced—an effect far transcending any imagination of ours, for that open curve reaches up to the Solar Deity Himself, and it is from Him that the response comes; and though that response inevitably brings as its result something of advancement to the man whose love and devotion have called it into existence, yet it also at the same time pours spiritual force into the great reservoir of the Adepts. So it comes to pass that every thought, which has no slightest taint of self in it, is a thought which directly helps the world, and thus the outpouring of love is a better defence than the strongest of shells, and the man who is filled with the power of that Divine Love needs no protection, because he lives within the heart of God Himself.

